

'Vampire trucker' pleads guilty to child porn charge

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By TOM HARVEY | The Salt Lake Tribune

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2016 09:24 pm



(Courtesy Photo) Timothy Vafeades

Courts » He still faces trial on four charges for alleged kidnapping and assault on two women.

A long-haul truck driver pleaded guilty on Wednesday to transporting child pornography, but still faces trial on four counts related to the alleged kidnapping and sexual assault of two women as he drove around the country.

Timothy Jay Vafeades, 55, faces a minimum of five years in prison and a maximum of 20 years, as well as a fine of up to \$250,000, on

the child porn charge.

Federal prosecutors agreed to dismiss a charge of possession of child pornography but a three-week jury trial on the four remaining charges is set to begin on July 5 before U.S. District Judge David Nuffer.

In the plea agreement, Vafeades admitted that in 2012 and 2013 he transported child pornography on computer hard drives in his truck as he traveled around the country.

Vafeades was charged in March 2014 with kidnapping and sexually assaulting two women who he allegedly kept in his truck for lengthy periods.

Since then, FBI agents have identified four other women who said they had similar experiences with Vafeades, according to court documents.

The women allege they were held captive by Vafeades, who took their identifications and cell phones, forced them to shower with him and sleep naked, forbade them from looking at other people and beat them repeatedly while also sexually assaulting them almost every day, according to court documents.

He allegedly used a Dremel power tool to grind off the teeth of at least three victims, and on one he also used an X-Acto knife so she could wear false teeth.

"Vafeades had his own set of false teeth with vampire fangs on them," according to a 2014 criminal complaint.

He also cut and dyed the hair of several of the women. Vafeades allegedly assaulted the

victims after gaining some measure of control over them by marrying them or luring them into his truck.

tharvey@sltrib.com

3 comments

JustChris1976

The sickness runs DEEP in this one. I hope he never sees freedom again. I can't understand keeping sex slaves, and driving them all over the country for your own sick pleasure. And what's up w/ vampire fangs? Scary.

4 weeks ago 2 likes

CougarFan_Original

I sure hope it's 20 years per victim, without possibility of getting out early for good behavior.

MrsWinkleman

"He gains some measure of control over women by marrying them or luring them into his truck."

Huh?

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The Salt Lake Tribune

10 myths and mysteries from unsolved murders to the Hull Mermaid

Mermaid

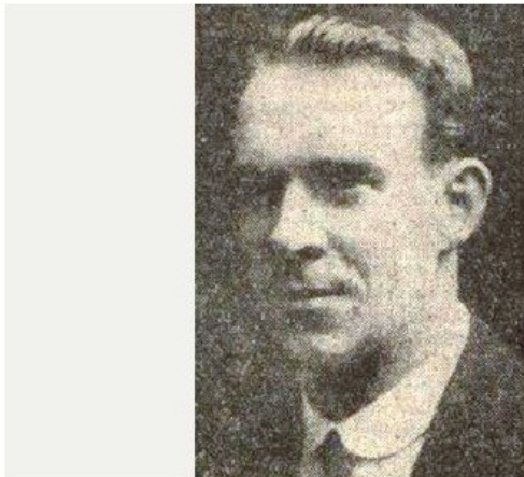
May 19th 2016

hulldailymail.co.uk

By Hull Daily Mail | Posted: March 08, 2015



MYSTERY MAN: Mike Covell pictured in Hull's Old Town.



*Hull is a hotbed for unsolved mysteries, myths and legends. **Will Ramsey** hears about just ten from our city's rich folklore.*

She looks a bit shrivelled and more than a little disturbed. But that shouldn't come as a surprise. After all, she's not supposed to exist. The Hull Mermaid, which



can be seen at Hull Maritime Museum, is just one of many myths and mysteries connected to our city, from tales of witchcraft and ghost ships to unsolved disappearances.

Mike Covell, whose East Hull home is connected to two mysterious events, has investigated many of them.

"When I was eight I saw a strange light above Hull, and the following morning asked my father what it was," Mike said. "He handed me a book on the paranormal and I became hooked from then on. I thought there has got to be something else out there."



Mike is the author of a series of books on the paranormal and history, including investigations into Jack The Ripper's alleged connections with the city. He also runs Amazing Hull Tours, which explore the mysteries of East Yorkshire, some of which are presented here.

"I love investigating myths," said Mike. "I like the dark side of history."



Mike is running a Fright Night Sleepover at the Annison Building, Witham, on Friday, March 13, 9.30pm-7am. Held in aid of Dove

House and Hull Homeless Outreach, tickets cost £30 and are available from Witham Pharmacy or by calling 01482 307880. Visit www.amazinghulltours.co.uk

1) The Garbutt Family: Mike Covell's East Hull home was the scene of two mysteries. In March 1929 the homeowner, Ernest Garbutt, vanished without trace. The Hull Daily Mail ran a report on the case, including his photo, but despite a manhunt he was never found. In April, 1945, his widow was attacked and killed with an axe by her lodger, Frederick Watson, who was tried and sent to an asylum. Mike says Watson's file is locked away in the National

MURDER OF A YOUNG WOMAN IN CAUGHEY-STREET. BRUTAL ATROCITY OF THE MURDERER.



Archives, with his murderous motives unknown.

2) The Hull Mermaid: Acquired by Sir Alister Hardy, the noted marine biologist, the mermaid perches in cabinet at Hull Maritime Museum. Thought to date back to the late 18th century or early 19th century, the hoax mermaid is crafted from monkey skin and a fish tail with her teeth carved from ivory.

3) Jack the Ripper: There have been 14 previously named Jack the Ripper suspects with links to Hull, including Dr Frederick Richard Chapman, who lived here, and James Thomas Sadler and Carl Feigenbaum who both visited the city. Between 1888 and 1900, Mike says numerous individuals were arrested for "Jack the Ripper-like conduct". The most infamous was James Gray who was held in Norfolk Street police station in 1900 for maliciously wounding five women along Beverley Road. The building later became the Blue Lamp pub.

4) Mary Jane Langley: Mary Jane, from the village of Preston, travelled to Hull one day in 1891 to get her photograph taken at William Mortimer Edmonds photography shop, on the site where Witham Late Night

Pharmacy stands today. Having boarded a train to Marfleet, she was later found brutally murdered in a ditch, not far from her home. Although no one was charged, numerous suspects were mentioned in relation to her crime including John Rennard, a local boxer. His dog, "Rough", was also arrested.

5) The Caughey Street Murder: There had not been in a murder in Victorian Hull for 20 years until January, 1871, when 20-year-old Emma Starkie was found with an axe embedded



in her skull in Caughey Street. Her body was removed to the "Dead House" in Parliament Street. Despite a wide scale investigation, no suspect was ever charged.

6) The Lime Street Sugar Mill Tragedy: In 1868 a large sugar mill, situated on Lime Street, collapsed killing and injuring numerous people, including two boys who were playing in the street. It has been claimed that there was a cover-up because the full extent of the deaths were not revealed. More recent research, carried out by Mike at the archives of the Hull History Centre, prove this to be false. The Board of Trade carried out a thorough investigation which was published in the local and national press. It revealed the names of those who were killed and injured, and also featured interviews with their



families. The bigger mystery was why the building was so overfilled at the time of the tragedy.

7) The Phantom Cannons of Hull: A strange event occurred on October 12, 1658, when people reported hearing three cannons being fired one



after another over Hull and a peal of muskets. The muskets continued for around seven minutes, with drums beating as if two armies were at battle. Shortly after, a thick mist or smoke was reported around about

the city, although there was no sight of the warring sides.

8) King Arthur at the Humber Estuary: Legend has it that King Arthur fought on the banks of the Humber Estuary at the sixth-century battle of Camlann. Said to have been the third and final battle between Arthur and his traitor nephew Mordred – at which Arthur was mortally wounded – historians have long argued over where and even if it happened at all, with battlefields in Wales, Cornwall and on Hadrian's Wall all being suggested.

9) The Annie, Hull's ghost ship: On July 6, 1849, The Hull Packet and East Riding Times featured a report about a Hull fishing vessel which had been lost at sea. A bottle, picked up at the mouth of the River Clyde in Scotland, contained a note from those on board the Annie, which said they were drifting rapidly into the Atlantic. Mike's research into the shipping news and records for the period failed to turn up any mention of a vessel bearing the name being lost. Whether or not she existed remains a mystery.

10) Witchcraft in Hull: In 1604, Hull was hit by the plague which led to the town gates being closed to stop people getting in and out. During this year accusations of witchcraft were placed on several citizens, with five people put to death by hanging for allegedly practising the dark arts.

2 comments

- Stimpy | March 08 2015, 9:18PM

I thought the the biggest mystery was how Labour keep on getting voted in, despite doing sweet FA to modernize the city. It is decades behind other cities like Leeds, Newcastle and Liverpool.

- mikehall71 | March 08 2015, 3:24PM

Biggest mystery is Hull being city of culture. Thought I'd get in first.

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10 historical superstitions we carry on today

Thursday 27th August 2015

historyextra.com



We may think that as a society we have outgrown beliefs in evil spirits and lucky amulets, but in fact most of us are still practising some of the superstitions of our medieval ancestors, without even knowing it. Here,

historical novelist Karen Maitland reveals 10 weird, but common, superstitions that persist today.

This article was first published in October 2014

1) Evil spirits lurk in Brussels sprouts

Do you dread the annual ritual of preparing the mountain of Brussels sprouts for that family Christmas dinner, painstakingly cutting a cross in every stalk before you toss them in the pan? Why do we do that? People claim we cut a cross in the bottom to help the sprouts cook better, but you don't find them served like that in most restaurants.

Without knowing it, you may be following a superstition dating back to the medieval times, when it was believed that evil spirits or tiny demons hid between the leaves of lettuces, sprouts and cabbage. These spirits could enter anyone who swallowed them, making the person ill or at the very least giving them stomach ache. So before cooking, a cross was cut in every sprout or cabbage to drive the evil spirits out from the leaves.

2) Do you suffer from Triskaidekaphobia?

That is, the fear of the number 13. It was thought the origin of unlucky 13 came from the Christian belief that 13 people sat down at the Last Supper and Judas was first to leave the table to betray his master, Jesus. So for centuries, hosts avoided having 13 people seated round a dining table, convinced that the first person to leave would die within the year. Indeed, 16th-century witch-hunters often tried to claim there had been 13 people at a gathering – proof that the accused were witches in league with the devil.

But fear of 13 predates Christianity. The ancient Romans believed that 13 was a bad omen, foretelling ill-fortune and death. The Vikings also hated 13, because in Norse mythology a banquet was held for 12 gods at which the trickster, Loki, appeared uninvited, like the wicked fairy in Sleeping Beauty, and as a result the beloved god, Balder, died.

3) Toss a coin and make a wish

Visit any famous pool, wishing well or fountain, and you'll see modern coins glittering at bottom. In ancient times, pools and wells were thought to be home to water spirits or deities, and offerings to them were thrown into the water to ensure fertility or success.

During the medieval period many ancient sacred springs became associated with saints who replaced the water spirits. People still came in the hope of finding cures or good fortune and, just they had in pre-Christian times, brought offerings to the saint, usually in the form of a bent pin or coin. If you install a wishing well today people will still throw coins into it.

4) Tossing the bride's garter

Many brides wear a lucky garter under their wedding gowns. In ancient times, bridal garments were considered blessed, and the bride would have all her clothes ripped from her by the guests on the wedding night as everyone tried to snatch a piece. Gradually attention focussed on the bride's garter-ribbon – a symbolic of sexuality and fertility.

In medieval and Tudor times, unmarried men fought for the bride's garter to ensure they would be the next to find a beautiful and fertile wife. Bachelors even mobbed the bride as she stood at the altar, throwing her to the ground and ripping the garters from her during the wedding ceremony. The church protested, and the custom evolved to the groom removing the lucky garter from his new wife in the bridal chamber and tossing them down from the window to the waiting men below who shouted words of encouragement.

5) Touch wood

Many of us still say 'touch wood' when talking about future plans, even if we don't actually perform the action: "It's supposed to be finished by Friday, touch wood".

It is one of mankind's oldest and most enduring fears that if we talk about any good thing, something will happen to curse it. Lurking spirits or demons will jinx our success, or a jealous neighbour might curse us with the evil eye.

The wood we used to touch would have been from one of the sacred trees – oak, ash or hawthorn – because the spirits of those trees were thought to have the power to protect us from the evil eye or demons. Today, any wood will do – people even touch wood-effect plastics.

6) 'She's giving me the evils'

A remark often heard in Eastenders, meaning someone is glaring at the character as if they wished them harm. From ancient times, nearly every culture around the world has believed that certain people have the power to cause their victim to have an accident, fall ill or die just by looking at them with malice.

Years ago, if you thought you had an evil eye but didn't want to hurt anyone, you were advised to let your first glance in the morning fall on a tree or shrub that would consequently wither and die – a great excuse for your gardening failures.

To protect yourself against someone 'overlooking' you with the evil eye, you could spit, cross your fingers, carry iron, wear a red thread, or, as they do in many parts of southern Europe today, wear a blue bead or the image of an open hand.

7) Holy-stones or hag-stones

Pebbles or small stones with a natural hole through them are frequently used as key rings or hung up near doors and windows for decoration. But this is more than just a convenient way to keep track of your keys – historically, such stones were thought to have powerful protective properties.

Keys were attached to holed-stones to guard the locks they fitted against robbers trying to break in, and to prevent evil spirits entering through the keyhole. The combination of iron and stone was thought to protect against all kinds of ill luck. Holed-pebbles were also hung near the doors of houses and animal-byres to protect the entrances from witches and demons.

8) Cutting the wedding cake

Back in Roman times, the wedding cake was made from wheat, fruit, nuts and honey – symbols of wealth and fertility. The cake was broken over the bride's head to ensure a fertile and prosperous marriage, and the guests scrambled to pick up the crumbs of good luck, which is why even today small pieces of wedding cake are sent to guests who can't attend.

Some modern brides are returning to the medieval custom of having a stack of individual cakes instead of a single large one. Originally these were fruit buns, heaped up in high stack, which the bride and groom had to leap over without toppling if they wanted to ensure a happy and fertile marriage.

By Tudor times, the stack had transformed into a single tiered cake that the bride cut, usually with the groom's hand over hers, in the belief that if the bride didn't cut the first slice, the marriage would be childless.

9) Mistletoe

From Saxon times, if mistletoe was hung over the door or above a hearth, it was a sacred oath that the host would not kill his guests, even if they were mortal enemies, and would defend them against attack for as long as they remained beneath the mistletoe. The mistletoe pledge was often used at times of great feasts, like the winter solstice, when fights could easily break out after heavy drinking.

According to Greek myth, the twin berries of mistletoe are the testicles of Uranus, which were severed and fell into the sea, becoming the blood and white foam from which Aphrodite was born. In Norse legend, mistletoe was dedicated to Frigga, also a goddess of love, so we kiss under the mistletoe, removing one berry for each kiss, till no berries remain and kissing must cease.

10) The Devil's meat

In the 1st Millennium AD, the weekly feast dedicated to the Viking god Odin was a very lively and popular communal celebration in Britain and Scandinavia, and the church found it almost impossible to stop people enjoying it. In AD 732, in an attempt to wipe out the practice, Pope Gregory III instructed Boniface to forbid the highly-prized food that was at the heart of this 'pagan' festival – horsemeat.

The church declared that horsemeat was the Devil's meat, and anyone eating it was sacrificing to pagan gods. The belief grew up that those who ate this 'heathen' meat would be struck down by sickness or cursed with terrible misfortune. Perhaps this deep-seated superstition is one of the reasons the British still find the concept of eating horses hard to swallow.

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This is what a £50 hot dog looks like

15:36, 6 Jun 2016 Updated 15:38, 6 Jun 2016 By Kirstie McCrum

mirror.co.uk

'World's most expensive hot dog' comes with black truffle mustard - its cost will make your eyes water



Maille

The £50 hotdog is being sold from the Maille Mustard Mobile truck on tour in Australia

Anyone springing £50 for food might expect a week's shop or a pub meal.

But serious diners are pulling out their wallets and parting with a bullseye for this fairly ordinary looking HOT DOG.

Featuring an Australian Angus beef sausage, the "haute dog" is lovingly laid on a brioche bun and topped with a Périgord black truffle-infused mustard.

The luxury wurst is from the mustards and vinegars specialist Maille, and has been sold

from a Mustard Mobile truck, currently travelling around Australia.

As well as the ready-to-eat feast, the £51.11 - or \$100 AUD - also buys you a pot of 100g of the fancy mustard.



Maille

The 'haute dog' is one of a range being sold from the Maille Mobile Mustard truck

"It is a very tasty, very sought after mustard," Joe Barrs, Maille's ambassador told Mashable Australia .

"We had a tub of it air freighted to us about a month ago... and we've sold out."

Anyone struggling to stump up £50 for the main event can console themselves with a £12.78 version with a Chablis white wine mustard - or even spring a measly £5.11 for the basic mustard version.

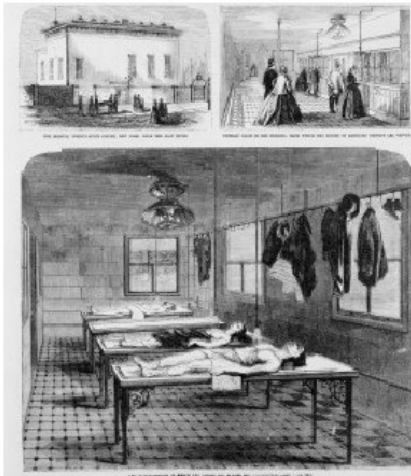
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1001 Ways To Die In New York City In 1855

stuffnobodycaresabout.com

A Detailed Look At New York City Mortality For One Week In 1855



The New York City morgue

Maybe there weren't 1001 ways to die, but in a typical week in New York's death log 160 years ago there were at least 73 ways to enter into eternity. New York City was only the borough of Manhattan and the population was around 629,000.

355 people died during the week of September 22 – 29, 1855.

First looking at how people died we see things that are not predominant causes of death in the United States today.

The most common causes of death that week were:

Consumption (38 dead); Infantile Marasmus (35 dead); Infantile Convulsions (31); Stillborn (25); Cholera (25) and Dysentery (20).

Consumption was the 19th century name for tuberculosis. What exactly is marasmus? It is severe malnutrition. Only 5 people died of cancer. Old age was listed *only once* as the cause of death.

Some other causes of death that week that are now relatively uncommon or in some cases all too common (i.e. shooting, suicide): Bleeding Bowels (1); Colic (1); Diarrhea (21); Dropsy of Head (9); Gravel (passing broken Kidney Stones) (1); Hydrophobia (Rabies) (9); Scurvy (1); Suicide by arsenic (1); Killed or Murder by shooting (1); Casualty being run over (1); Drowned (1) and Teething (2). *Teething?*

Death came to both sexes rather evenly with 181 males and 174 females dying. White persons – 347; Colored persons – 8. As far as nativity, U.S citizens comprised the vast majority of those who died, 273, while 50 people hailing from Ireland passed away.

In the 19th century it was almost expected that many children frequently did not survive childhood. The death statistics bear this out. Children's deaths far outnumbered adults 248 to 107. Dying were 135 infants under one year of age and 60 children between the ages of one and two. On the flip side very few people would be considered "elderly." 17 people died over the age of 60, with only 2 people dying between the ages of 80 – 90.

Out of the 355 people who died, 22 passed away in public institutions such as City Hospital and Ward's Island Emigrant Hospital.

Below is the complete city mortality report reproduced from *The New York Times*.

1. johnApril 6, 2015 at 10:35 am

[click to enlarge](#)

Hi John Found it while researching a previous story about shot towers in New York City which ran on our site Feb 3 2015. The mortality list was on the same page in the newspaper. Thought it was interesting. thanks for asking. B.P.

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Confraternities, *Memoria*, and Law in Late Medieval Italy¹

Thomas Frank

To view medieval brotherhoods or confraternities as associations of laymen or clerics with predominantly religious functions² almost automatically leads to the conclusion that fraternity and *memoria* have much in common. This, at least, can be assumed if we focus on the religious or socio-religious dimension of the notion, marked in the following article by the Latin term *memoria*.³ Such an understanding of *memoria*, emphasizing its religious dimension, could be further elaborated. It is indeed possible to interpret all the efforts of Christians (or of adherents of other religions) to assure the salvation of their souls as care of *memoria* in a wider sense. In this case, not only prayer and liturgy, but also charitable works, as offered for example by brotherhoods, hospitals, or individual benefactors, could be included because all these pious activities point to the effect that the believer and god 'commemorate' each other.

This article, however, concentrates on a narrower idea of *memoria*, defined as performative commemoration that is realised liturgically and collectively. The focus lies especially on commemoration of the dead and prayers for the living. What this meant for confraternities in late medieval Italy is discussed in the first part of this article (I). Next, legal documents and juridical texts will be used to illustrate the role of *memoria* for the perception of confraternities in medieval society (II). The article concludes with some reflections concerning the concept of 'confraternity' in modern historical research (III).

I. Commemoration of the Dead and Prayers for the Living in Italian Confraternities.

The affinity between fraternity and *memoria* becomes apparent as soon as we notice the various similarities between 'unions of prayer' and institutionalised confraternities. Unions of prayer, or *fraternitates*, the dominant form of mutual liturgical commemoration in early medieval Europe,⁴ and institutionalised

1 This article is a slightly shortened and revised English version of my earlier work "Bruderschaften, *Memoria* und Recht im spätmittelalterlichen Italien." I am especially grateful to Nadja Kadel (Berlin) and Dr. Caroline Welsh (Berlin) for helping me with the English translation.

2 See below, notes 36 and 38.

3 My notion of *memoria* is distinct, therefore, from the very broad concept proposed by Otto Gerhard Oexle in his introduction to *Memoria als Kultur*, 9–78, especially p. 39, where '*Memoria*' includes "all possible aspects of life" (my translation).

4 An English example can be found in the *Liber vitae* of Durham; see now *The Durham "Liber vitae" and Its Context*.

guilds, there was no justification for the bishop's demand for controlling rights nor an obligation to pay taxes to him.

The Perugian jurist Baldus de Ubaldis (1327–1400) was one of those critics, though a moderate one. He considered confraternities to be secular associations not subordinated to episcopal jurisdiction.³⁰ Accordingly, he disapproved of the taxation of bequests granted by testators to confraternities. Fraternal groups, he argued, were associations of *persons* and therefore the bequests they received were dedicated to personal use, which by law was exempt from taxation. On the other hand, he accepted the payment of the *quarta* if a bequest was intended for the poor of a specific hospital, even if it was managed by a confraternity.³¹

Baldus applied this general criterion, based on the distinction between a place (*locus*, e.g.: a hospital) and the people who operate or live at the locus, to concrete cases of legal dispute as well. In one of his *consilia* he argued that the confraternity of S. Vitale in the *contado* of Assisi, having been named heir by a testator from that town, was not a *collegium ecclesiasticum*. For this reason and because the heritage had been left *ex quadam devotione*, not *ad pias causas*, the confraternity did not owe the *quarta portio canonica* to the bishop. In another case, he categorized a hospital owned by a lay confraternity in Amelia (Umbria) as *locus profanus*. To justify this opinion, he emphasized the fact that the hospital had been founded more than a hundred years before without any participation from the local bishop and that the confraternity, the founder, and owner, was a *collegium* permitted by the law

confraternities and about the comparability of confraternities and craft guilds see Francesco degli Atti, "Tractatus," fol. 194rb, and Trexler, "The Bishop's Portion," 331–332. The similarity of these groups was also denied by Petrus de Ubaldis, "Tractatus de canonica portione episc(opali) et paroc(hiali)," esp. fol. 209vb, against the opinion of Petrus's brother Baldus: "quia collegium scholarium vel mercatorum non est deputatum ad pios usus, sicut collegium eorum de fraternitate." For Petrus see below, note 34.

30 Baldus de Ubaldis, *Commentaria*, Lyon 1585, on Cod. 1, 3, 48 (49), fol. 58rb. Trexler, "The Bishop's Portion," 332 and *passim*, quotes this passage from the edition Venice 1577. Against Francesco degli Atti, Baldus argues: "Sed respondeo, licet [disciplinati] habeant ista singularia [that is, *statuta firmata ab episcopo*], tamen secundum veram existentiam statu[s] eorum ipsi sunt praecise laici. Unde, sicut alias dixi de bechetis [semi-religious groups], isti habent accidentia sine subiecto. Praeterea ea ratione qua isti tenerentur ad quartam, tenerentur ad similia legis dioecesanae; cur non ad charitativum subsidium, quod adhuc magis est privilegiatum quam quarta legatorum? Sed istud est falsum, quia nullo iure cauetur, quod tenerentur ad charitativum subsidium." For the continuation, see Trexler, "The Bishop's Portion," 332, n. 143.

31 Baldus de Ubaldis, *Commentaria*, fol. 58va. In practice, Baldus did not always maintain this concession to the interests of the bishops. *Consilium* 28 in a supplementary edition to the five volumes of his *consilia* (Baldus de Ubaldis, *Consiliorum vol. sextum*, 1602) denies generally the obligation of lay (including confraternal) hospitals to pay the *quarta*. For a similar argument see Baldus de Ubaldis, *Consiliorum* (1589), vol. 4, No. 259, where he underlines, however, the importance of the local *consuetudo*.

because erected *causa pietatis*. However, he conceded that the bishop should have the right to control the appropriate use of the heritage.³²

For Baldus, too, the border that protected confraternities and their hospitals from the bishop's tax claims was marked by the limits of the notion of *locus pius*. The Perugian jurist combined the Roman legal formula *ad pias causas*, that is, the qualification of a testamentary bequest as dedicated "to pious purposes," with his characterization of the receiving institution as *locus pius*. However, he distinguished between bequests intended *ad pias causas* on the one hand and religious motivations in a broader sense (cf. above: *ex quadam devotione*) on the other. As far as hospitals were concerned, Baldus agreed to consider them as *loca pia* if the diocesan bishop had approved their foundation.³³ But this qualification did not automatically apply to the confraternity who eventually owned the hospital: the confraternity was to be regarded as *locus pius* only under the condition that it was not only approved by the bishop but also formally erected *auctoritate episcopi*.

Thus, Baldus de Ubaldis chose a middle course between the jurists pleading for the secular character of confraternities and the supporters of an extensive episcopal supervision. Baldus's brother, Petrus de Ubaldis (c. 1335–after 1400), was a representative of the latter and one of his critics. In his discussion of the *quarta portio canonica*, Petrus developed a typology of confraternities centred on three types of purposes:³⁴ brotherhoods could be founded *ad actum disciplinae*, which included flagellation and other rather ambitious religious practices like pilgrimage, vigils, fasting, or prayers; or *ad actus charitatis, misericordiae et pietatis*, that is, mutual help for the brothers, burial, suffrages and alms-giving; or *ad vitam contemplativam*, concentration on praying to God. In this list of religious functions the rituals of *memoria*, if understood in a narrower sense (burial, suffrages, alms for the dead), are not predominant; they do however play an important role. Petrus de Ubaldis concluded that, whenever a fraternal group implemented at least in part the functions enumerated above, this was a clear sign that the group not only constituted an authentic confraternity permitted by the law, but was also a *locus pius*. Thus, there was no reason why it should be exempt from the *quarta portio canonica*.

These few glances at the debate between Baldus de Ubaldis, Francesco degli Atti, Petrus de Ubaldis and others may suffice to demonstrate that the Middle Ages did not find a definite answer to the question of whether confraternities were *loca pia* or not. In other words, the classification of confraternities as part of the ecclesiastical or the secular sphere remained controversial. The role of *memoria* in this debate is twofold. On the one hand, the lawyers turned to *memoria* when they wanted to prove the ecclesiastical character of confraternities. Representatives of

32 Baldus de Ubaldis, *Consiliorum* (1589), vol. 2, No. 134; vol. 3, No. 5, and cf. vol. 5, No. 160, where he underlines, though in a different context, the lay character of the confraternity of S. Agostino in Foligno.

33 Baldus de Ubaldis, *Consiliorum* (1589), vol. 4, No. 167.

34 Petrus de Ubaldis, "Tractatus," fol. 208rb–210va, especially 208rb; at fol. 208vb–209ra, Petrus summarizes his brother's arguments.

this opinion, like Petrus de Ubaldis, mentioned suffrages and commemoration of the dead with more attention than the protagonists of the opposite view. On the other hand, *memoria* served as an argument to strengthen the general legitimacy of confraternities, claiming it was an important element of their religious mission. When that mission, as was the case in Assisi in the years after 1370, had to be defended against critics or authorities, the reference to the merits achieved by liturgical commemoration of the dead and prayers for the living were a good argument in favour of the confraternities' right to exist.

III. The Concept of 'Confraternity' in Modern Historical Research

The medieval debate about the legal position of confraternities invites a reconsideration of concepts of 'confraternity' as they are used by historians. If we were to extend the perspective from our selection of official interventions and juridical texts to literary and theological writings,³⁵ we would find that Italians of the later Middle Ages had a rather complex view of confraternities. They agreed that confraternities, at least lay confraternities, were in some way comparable to craft guilds and semi-religious groups, but this did not mean that these three types of association could not be distinguished in other respects. Yet, there was no consensus about the question of what position in society was to be attributed to confraternities, nor about the possibility of construing a definite legitimation of their right to exist. Contemporary observers, at least the more keen-witted ones, knew that this situation of indeterminacy, where society and confraternities were involved in a continuous process of negotiating limits and distinctions, was a problematic one and had to be treated *as a problem*.

Whatever way a modern concept of 'confraternity' may be designed in order to satisfy the needs of historical research, it should certainly not fall behind the level of complexity already reached by medieval reflection. Nevertheless, reviewing the many attempts to resolve the terminological problems raised by medieval confraternities, one gets the impression that many historians, especially German historians from the nineteenth century to the present day, work out definitions and typologies by putting together sets of fixed distinctive features. These features include the predominance of religious and charitable functions (e.g. *memoria*), dedication to a specific saint or cult, socio-religious rituals such as common meals or processions, voluntary membership, a certain continuity in time, autonomous creation of statutes, oaths of allegiance for new members, and so on. There would be nothing wrong with these criteria if they did not raise two difficulties. On the one hand every researcher, influenced by the specific character of his/her sources and examples, will choose his/her own features; as a result, we have to deal with a great variety of rival notions of 'confraternity.' On the other hand, and this is more important, all these attempts to classify and define confraternities implicitly treat their object as if it were a sociological or juridical 'essence,' a social entity

35 Some bibliographical indication in Frank, *Bruderschaften*, 14.

that may be duly described as soon as a correct set of characteristics has been found. This approach is misleading. It ignores that a 'correct' set of characteristics cannot exist because medieval confraternities had a problematic structure, were open to negotiations with society, had to justify themselves, and were challenged continuously by norms and ideals, for example by the ideal of 'brotherhood' with its manifold Christian significations.

Even more recent and serious proposals for defining confraternities or for developing a more general notion of fraternity-like social groups do not seem to be aware of these pitfalls. This is true not only for the work of Lukas Remling,³⁶ whose definition has become rather influential in German historiography on confraternities, but also for Otto Gerhard Oexle's concept of 'guild,' which is based mainly on the juridical effects of the oath of membership.³⁷

Probably the most recent attempt to sharpen the concept of (medieval) confraternity is my own, published in 2002 in a German monograph about brotherhoods in three Italian towns in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.³⁸ My point of departure is Remling's definition, but I try to benefit from the—already medieval—insight that confraternities are characterized by a structure of openness. Accordingly, we must take into account the fact that they referred to religious and social ideals that were also claimed by rival groups and institutions, and that their

36 Remling, *Bruderschaften in Franken*, 49–50, states that confraternities are "voluntary and stable associations dedicated primarily to religious, but often also to charitable activities, who exist within or besides the parish; membership does neither influence the single member's ecclesiastical or juridical status nor will it necessarily change his private life." See the original German version: confraternities are "freiwillige, auf Dauer angelegte Personenvereinigungen mit primär religiösen, oft auch caritativen Aktivitäten, bestehend innerhalb oder neben der Pfarrei, wobei durch die Mitgliedschaft weder der kirchenrechtliche Status des einzelnen tangiert wird, noch sich im privaten Lebensbereich Veränderungen ergeben müssen". In the same context, Remling calls confraternities "particular inner-ecclesiastical groups" ("innerkirchliche Sondergruppen") because he has no doubt that they belong to the sphere of the church.

37 Oexle, "Liturgische Memoria"; Oexle, "Gilden"; Oexle, "Conjuratio"; Oexle, "Die Kaufmannsgilde von Tiel"; Oexle, "Kulturwissenschaftliche Reflexionen"; Oexle, "Gilde."

38 Frank, *Bruderschaften*, 15: "Medieval confraternities were stable associations with both explicitly religious functions, often including works of charity, and implicitly social and economical functions. These functions were translated into actions of mostly ritual character, which affected both the inside of the confraternity and the external world. In doing so they generated a group identity which was influenced by the society's demand of control and the members' interests. Membership did not influence the single member's ecclesiastical or juridical status." The German original: "Mittelalterliche Bruderschaften waren auf Dauer angelegte Personenvereinigungen mit explizit religiösen, darunter oft auch karitativen, implizit sozialen und wirtschaftlichen Funktionen. Die aus diesen Funktionen entwickelten, meist rituell vollzogenen, nach innen wie nach außen wirkenden Handlungsweisen erzeugten in Auseinandersetzung mit den Kontrollansprüchen der Gesellschaft und den Mitgliederinteressen eine Gruppenidentität. Die Mitgliedschaft berührte den kirchenrechtlichen Status des einzelnen nicht."

existence was marked by a permanent, more or less productive tension with the rest of society. It makes no sense to presuppose a preexisting 'essence' of confraternities, because such an approach overlooks the fact that they were products of a continuous search for a credible balance between norm and practice, ideal and reality. Thus, the *memoria* performed by brotherhoods was more than an active contribution to the salvation of their members', benefactors', or clients' souls: it was an argument in a never ending struggle for group identity and recognition by other social actors.

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confraternities have more in common than a mere terminological kinship based on their common reference to the Latin term *fraternitas*.⁵ The main reason for this is that ritual remembrance of persons encourages the formation of groups and is essential if such remembrance is to endure. In addition, many late medieval brotherhoods show that there are forms of transition between 'union of prayer' and 'confraternity.' A good example is the *compagnia* of Orsanmichele in Florence,⁶ where even a dead person could become a member, which is to say that the souls of the dead were allowed to benefit from the merits of the living in a similar manner to traditional unions of prayer since the early middle ages.

In other cases, brotherhoods sought fraternal bonds with ecclesiastical institutions or 'fraternised' with each other.⁷ Furthermore, in the fifteenth century, despite the existence of a large number of local confraternities all over Europe, wider unions of prayer began to flourish again. These unions explicitly called themselves *fraternitas*, *Bruderschaft*, or *Gesellschaft*, for example the German *Ursulabruderschaften* (fraternities of St Ursula) or the *Rosenkranzbruderschaften* (rosary fraternities).⁸

The engagement of medieval confraternities with *memoria* has left behind traces in texts of a variety of origins and functions: in liturgical or paraliturgical documents, in confraternal statutes, in administrative materials, as well as in last wills where the testator entrusted the care of his remembrance to a confraternity. The classical types of late medieval commemorative writings—necrologies and anniversary books—were primarily prepared and used by clerical confraternities.⁹ However, lay brotherhoods also had to register the names of those they wanted to pray for. This could happen provisionally, as advised by a chapter in the statutes of

5 Oexle, "Liturgische *Memoria* und historische Erinnerung"; Meersseman, *Ordo fraternitatis*, especially 1:55 et seq. (Val d'Elsa). For *Chartulae fraternitatis* in Southern Italy see Ruggiero, *Principi, nobiltà e chiesa nel Mezzogiorno longobardo*, 156 et seq.; Frank, *Studien zu italienischen Memorialzeugnissen*, 79–82, 161, 170–177. New insights in the relationship between unions of prayer and confraternities in the Order of the Holy Spirit are offered by Rehberg, "Nuntii - questuarii - falsarii."

6 Henderson, *Piety and Charity in Late Medieval Florence*, 198, referring to Orsanmichele's statutes from 1333. See also Meersseman, *Ordo fraternitatis*, 1:112, No. 5 (Tarragona).

7 Meersseman, *Ordo fraternitatis*, 1:172, 176–177 (London). Prietzel, *Die Kalande im südlichen Niedersachsen*, 193. De Sandre Gasparini, "Confraternite e cura animarum nei primi decenni del Quattrocento," especially p. 295.

8 Schnyder, *Die Ursulabruderschaften des Spätmittelalters*; Schnyder, "Unions de prières patronnées par Sainte Ursule en Allemagne du Sud à la fin du XVe s."; Kliem, *Die spätmittelalterliche Frankfurter Rosenkranzbruderschaft*; Schmitt, "Apostolat mendiant et société." However, some rosary fraternities did not form large networks but remained local phenomena, as in Altenburg (Thüringen); see, Meister, *Sie sollen bruderschaft halden*, 58–76.

9 Lemaître, "La Consorce du Clergé de Lodi"; Rigon, *Clero e città*, 16, 23, 88, 200–203.

the Disciplinati of S. Rufino in Assisi, but fully elaborated anniversary books of lay fraternities also exist.¹⁰

To review briefly the content and form of confraternal practices regarding *memoria*, one may consider the care of deceased brothers as consisting of three phases and a prologue at the bedside. Many statutes connect instructions for the support of sick brothers directly with descriptions of what should happen when the sick person died. In this case, the first phase was the preparation of the burial. This ritual took place with the attendance of—and if necessary at the cost of—the assembled confraternity. The collective appearance at funerals was an important moment, not only for the confraternity's self-identity, but also for its public position. After this, the short-term *memoria* followed as second phase. It consisted of a certain number of funeral masses, celebrated by clerical members or by external priests, and prayers for the soul of the deceased performed by the lay brothers and, if existing, the lay sisters. The third phase included the rituals of long-term remembrance: once or several times a year masses and *officia* were held for the community of all dead members; in special cases the brotherhood organized anniversary functions for selected individuals.

This course of action can be verified in many confraternal sources. As an example, one can refer to the statutes collected in Padua by Giuseppina De Sandre Gasparini.¹¹ Although these texts illustrate some possible variations, they also show the continuing importance of the topic of *memoria* within different types of brotherhoods. Confraternal services for the salvation of the soul were usually limited to members. If extended to persons not belonging to a confraternity, this was done mainly for benefactors, as a regulation from Padua shows. While this regulation derives from a comparatively late statute, written in 1502, the confraternity of S. Bartolomeo in Borgo San Sepolcro, analysed by James Banker, already ordered something comparable as early as 1269.¹² In addition, there were various brotherhoods who guaranteed some primary care of *memoria* to the external

10 S. Rufino (1347): "Et quod prior [fraternitatis] fieri faciat unam tabulam in qua scribantur omnia nomina dictorum nostrorum benefactorum, que tabula poni debeat super altare et dicta nomina semper in oratione legantur." (Nicolini, "Statuto della fraternita dei disciplinati di S. Rufino," 324). For Rome, see Pavan, "La confraternita del Salvatore." The *Liber Anniversariorum* of this confraternity is edited in Egidi, *Necrologi*, 1:311–541.

11 De Sandre Gasparini, *Statuti di confraternite religiose di Padova nel medioevo*.

12 For Padua, see the confraternity of S. Giovanni Evangelista della Morte, 1502: "E perchè nui siamo molto più obligati a quelli che hanno lassata ala fraternita nostra qualche chossa stabile dele sue cha ad altra persona, pertanto volemo che a tuti quelli siano facti li soi anniversarii, secondo la lor dispositione, et che tuti nui cum l'habito e disciplina siamo obligati de esser presenti et de pregar devotamente el Signor per le lor anime." (De Sandre Gasparini, *Statuti*, 211, chap. 35). For Borgo San Sepolcro, see the confraternity of S. Bartolomeo, 1269: "Prior in ipsa congregatione adnuntiat et dicit mortuos Fraternitatis et alios qui non sunt de Fraternitate qui Fraternitati aliquid relinquerunt, dicendo [...] talis non erat de Fraternitate tamen reliquit Fraternitati tamen rogare Deum pro ipsius anima [...]" (Banker, *Death in the Community*, 189).

poor, fostering their own salvation with such an act of charity. The funds necessary for this charitable work came mostly from external contributions and endowments. A somewhat different case must be made for clerical confraternities, frequently engaged in commemoration of deceased outsiders. Many of them pursued this as a business, as a kind of professional service to be paid by the customers. The *Universitas cleri* of Viterbo or the *Consorzio del clero* of Lodi serve as examples of such conduct.¹³

Another form of liturgical commemoration performed by medieval brotherhoods is the suffrages for the living. These were prayers meant to improve both the physical and spiritual conditions of various social groups and persons. One of the most detailed listings of this kind may be found in a liturgical instruction (*Officium*) for performing the weekly ritual of flagellation, written for the Disciplinati of Viterbo around 1340 and still used in the fifteenth century. These prayers were dedicated to the Church, the reigning pope, the bishop of Viterbo, some of his deceased predecessors, all clergymen, virgins and widows, the whole of Christianity, the spiritual and physical welfare of all mankind, pilgrims, the diseased, seamen, heretics and schismatics, the Jews, Pagans and mortal sinners, the souls in purgatory, the Holy Land, peace in the world and in Viterbo, the works of all men and women, and the members of the Viterbo Disciplinati and similar confraternities everywhere, including their benefactors and even their adversaries.¹⁴

The Viterbo *Officium* also states explicitly how the interaction between liturgical commemoration and other religious activities of this Disciplinati group was conceived: "In order that God will listen to these our prayers, everybody shall pronounce five Lord's Prayers and five Ave Marias and thereafter flagellate himself."¹⁵ Thus, the text reveals how the confraternity wanted its religious functions to be interpreted: it considered itself to be an intermediary to God and believed that one of its essential functions was to contribute to the communication between earth and heaven. In the context of this act of communication, the rituals of *memoria* were an important, but not the only element: all the other religious practices and privileges of confraternities—for example indulgences, the support of the poor, and sometimes even the brothers' common meal—either contributed directly to the salvation of the participant's soul or at least reinforced the effects of the rituals of *memoria*. The reasons for the significant increase in demand for these agents of intermediation in the later Middle Ages cannot be discussed here. A productive approach for answering this question may be found in historical investigations focussing on the increasingly difficult relationship between clergy and laymen, on

13 Buzzi, *La "Margarita iurium cleri viterbiensis"*; Frank, *Bruderschaften*, 52–53, 164–165; Frank, "I canonici nell'associazione del clero di Viterbo"; Lemaître, *La Consorce*.

14 Sgrilli, *Testi viterbesi*, 15–17, 65–6, 75–6, 121–123.

15 Sgrilli, *Testi viterbesi*, 123: "Acciò ch(e) Dio exaudesca queste p(ri)arie, ciascheuno dica v P(at)ern(ost)ri et v Avema(r)ia co(n) disciplina" (thus in a fifteenth-century version of the *Officium*).

the development of lay piety, on social change in late medieval towns, and on the structure of local churches.

The close link between confraternities and *memoria* is a phenomenon not limited to Italy. It can be confirmed by examples in many other areas of Europe. A spectacular case is the English campaign of 1388, when the government attempted to clarify the property and legal status of all guilds and confraternities existing in the realm. Jan Gerchow's analysis of the guild returns sent to the royal court reveals that most of the groups claimed explicitly and almost stereotypically that the *memoria* of their members was one of their principal purposes.¹⁶ For Germany and France, the omnipresence of the confraternal commitment to *memoria* is documented in many case studies. We must therefore limit ourselves here to a few indications for further reading.¹⁷ The fact that a review article about historical research on brotherhoods, published in 1998,¹⁸ does not even mention the topic is striking *ex negativo* evidence that many modern historians consider liturgical commemoration as a self-evident aspect of confraternal life.

Summarizing this overview, we may state that confraternities normally helped both their own members and, less frequently, persons from outside to face sickness and death, offering them respectful burial, prayers, and masses for their souls. As a result, *memoria* forms a constant in the history of confraternities. This conclusion is confirmed by the fact that engagement with liturgical commemoration is not limited to Christian brotherhoods, but also evolved in other religious contexts, for example in late medieval and early modern Jewish confraternities.¹⁹ In claiming it a "constant," I do not want to imply that *memoria* was accomplished always and everywhere in the same way and with equal intensity. On the contrary, many differences can be noted, either as a result of an unequal distribution of material resources or because the views about the salutary power attributed to commemorative rituals changed over the time. Moreover, there were regional differences: although I risk being blamed for engaging in generalizations, I would maintain that late medieval Italy produced a much larger number of lay confraternities with strong religious ambitions than, for example, Germany. However, notwithstanding all regional and typological differences, it is certain that *memoria* was one of the core functions of late medieval and early modern confraternities, no matter how multifaceted and versatile these functions may have been in other respects.

16 Gerchow, "Gilds and Fourteenth-Century Bureaucracy."

17 Remling, *Bruderschaften in Franken*, 87, 211, 309 and *passim*; Prietzel, *Die Kalande im südlichen Niedersachsen*; Militzer, *Quellen zur Geschichte der Kölner Laienbruderschaften*, in particular the editions of statutes in vols. 1 and 2; Meister, *Sie sollen bruderschafft halden*; Vincent, *Des charités bien ordonnées*. A general survey is de La Roncière, "Le confraternite in Europa fra trasformazioni sociali e mutamenti spirituali," esp. 334–335, 350, 358.

18 Pamato, "Le confraternite medievali."

19 Goldberg, *Les deux rives du Yabbok*, esp. 103–165; Horowitz, "Jewish Confraternal Piety in Sixteenth-Century Ferrara."

II. *Memoria* in Legal Documents and Juridical Texts.

Since this finding is not really surprising, there is no need, for the purpose of this survey, to refine the phenomenology of confraternal commemoration rituals by giving further details. Instead, I would like to investigate the functions attributed to these rituals by texts that deal with the legal status of confraternities. Because confraternal groups had to justify their position in society against local competitors as well as secular and ecclesiastical powers, we have to focus on three of the different overlapping legal spheres that form the discursive space of medieval law: local, territorial, and general (that is, canon and Roman law).

On the local level, negotiations between confraternities and authorities are reflected in confraternity statutes as well as in privileges or prohibitions imposed by local ecclesiastical or secular powers. If statutes are introduced or framed by an episcopal confirmation act, we have a formal element indicating that this text should be read as the result of a compromise between the bishop and the confraternity. This is the case, for example, in the regulation of the Roman confraternity *S. Salvatore ad Sancta Sanctorum*, written in 1331, as well as in some statutes from Bergamo dating from the thirteenth to the fourteenth centuries.²⁰ More detailed information has been preserved in Assisi: the Disciplinati of S. Stefano created an important statute in 1327, after having received a privilege from the local bishop in 1325. A few years later, further privileges were added by some functionaries of the Papal States. Each of these texts highlights the devotional engagement of the brotherhood, including *memoria*, as a particularly meritorious pious work.²¹

The awareness that *memoria* is a fundamental issue for the legitimation of confraternal groups can already be found in the writings of the Carolingian archbishop Hincmar of Rheims. Pierre Michaud-Quantin, Otto Gerhard Oexle and others have analysed Hincmar's impatient remarks concerning the *geldonias* and *confratrias* of the ninth century.²² These critical exhortations, a seminal text for generations of historians doing research on medieval brotherhoods, demonstrate that confraternities were often forced to seek justification because their position in society was always controversial. It is true that there are numerous official documents approving brotherhoods, but these can be contrasted with an equal

20 Pavan, "Gli statuti della società dei raccomandati del Salvatore ad Sancta Sanctorum (1331–1496)." Little, *Libertà, carità e fraternità*, 111 (Misericordia, 1265), 125 (San Michele, 1266/1272), 179 (Carcerati, 1320), 193 (Disciplinati, 1336).

21 For the edition of the statutes, see Menestò, "Statuto della fraternità dei disciplinati di S. Stefano." See also Frank, "La testimonianza più antica dello statuto dei disciplinati di S. Stefano di Assisi." A new edition of these statutes is in preparation in the context of the "progetto di S. Stefano", directed by Attilio Bartoli Langeli and Francesco Santucci. For the privileges see Meloni, "Per la storia delle confraternite disciplinate in Umbria nel sec. XIV"; I have used the reprint in *Saggi sull'Umbria medioevale*, Appendices, 2–6, 8–9.

22 *Capitula episcoporum*, 2. Teil, 43 (a. 852). Michaud-Quantin, *Universitas*, 182–184, 228. Oexle, "Gilden als soziale Gruppen in der Karolingerzeit." Oexle, "Coniuratio und Gilde im frühen Mittelalter."

number of critical statements, threats of prohibition, or formal interdictions of confraternal groups. Such restrictions were usually issued by bishops or communal governments and affected only the local level. However, quite often the attempt was made to implement them in ecclesiastical provinces or in secular territories,²³ as in the case of the English investigation of 1388 mentioned above. Let us consider one episode from the Papal States in a more detailed manner.

As we learn from a document in Assisi, on 23 August 1370 Pope Urban V ordered the abolishment of certain *secte et congregationes disciplinatorum* in the entire Papal States, sparing only those pious groups that practised private penitential rites and had masses celebrated. The pope justified his intervention by stating that the rites performed by those “wolves in sheep’s clothing,” namely the Disciplinati, were an insult to God, displeasing and harmful for the parishes. In order to prevent the danger of excommunication announced by the papal delegate, Bishop Petrus of Montefiascone, and in order to prepare an appeal to the pope, the flagellant fraternities of Assisi asked the advice of five lawyers from Perugia. The latter’s *consilia* and a copy of the pope’s mandate to Bishop Petrus have been conserved in a manuscript at the archive of the Disciplinati of S. Stefano in Assisi.²⁴

The jurists scrutinized the proceedings of the papal curia concentrating on questions of procedure and content. The procedural aspect was the main issue in the first *consilium*, written by the *legum doctor* Antonius Aceti, later known as the Signore of Fermo,²⁵ and is of minor importance for our discussion. With regard to the content, two other experts came to the conclusion that Assisi’s confraternities were not at all affected by the papal mandate for the simple reason that these pious associations were permitted by law because *realiter* they behaved well, worshipping god and observing the commandments of religion. It was not forbidden, after all—and the pope himself had admitted this—to congregate for non-public penitence and to celebrate divine service. In short, the threat of excommunication pronounced by the bishop of Montefiascone had no effect.²⁶

23 Examples of the fourteenth-fifteenth century: Michaud-Quantin, *Universitas*, 228–229; Schnyder, *Ursulabruderschaften*, 28; Hefele/Hergenröther, *Conciliengeschichte*, 8:51, 54; de La Roncière, “Le confraternite,” 373–375.

24 Assisi, Archivio Capitolare della Cattedrale di San Rufino, S. Stefano, ms. 80, fols. 1r–6r. The affair is mentioned by Meloni, *Per la storia*, 78–79, who followed an indication given by Ilarino da Milano, but does not identify the manuscript. See, Frank, *Bruderschaften*, 315. Urban V was generally an adversary of flagellants and Disciplinati brotherhoods. As early as 1 April 1370 he had asked the rector of the Duchy of Spoleto to hand over a *domus fraternitatis laicorum* to the chapter of S. Vincenzo in Bevagna (Umbria), driving out the owners of the *domus*, namely “persone certis temporibus publice se flagellantes, quarum statum papa merito suspectum habet.” The pope intended to extinguish these flagellants *de fidelium finibus*: Urban V, *Lettres communes*, vol. 9, n. 27043.

25 Esch, *Bonifaz IX*, 148–149 and *passim*; Anon., “Aceti, Antonio.”

26 A *consilium* written by Franciscus de Coppolis de Perusio (for this family see Nicolini, article “Coppoli, Francesco”) states: “In fraternitatibus de quibus loquitur nulla mala fi-

"Realiter," the survival of Assisi's Disciplinati probably had more to do with the unfavourable political situation the Avignonese curia had to face in the Papal States in the 1370s than with the effectiveness of this juridical argumentation. However, the incident shows that experts in Roman and canon law considered the proof of the religious usefulness of the confraternities to be the most convincing argument for their justification. In a more generalized perspective, we may argue that at least in situations of tension and conflict, most texts dealing with confraternities shed an especially brilliant light on their religious functions. This is not only the case in academic juristic discussions, or when the legal doctrine is used in concrete law suits, but also in confraternity statutes and in privileges issued by local authorities. The reference to religious engagement opened a space where it seemed possible to create a consensus about the legitimacy of the confraternities' existence. A closer reading of the *consilia* of the Perugian *doctores* shows that they mention two concrete religious functions: penitential practices and the organization of the divine service. Both activities are affiliated with *memoria*: on the one hand with prayers for the living, enforced through flagellation, and on the other with masses for the deceased.

But even the religious or *memoria* argument did not always give unquestionable results. As the pope's image of the wolf in sheep's clothing shows, one could always claim that this argument was false. However, despite the intrinsic openness of the legal discourse, it is worth investigating more attentively the writings of the jurisconsults. Although the major collections of Roman and canon law do not say much about confraternities, there are nevertheless some indications in the doctrine of the corporations (*universitates*, *collegia*), developed since the thirteenth century by canonists and legists. Even if they are only a minor concern in these debates, confraternities are mentioned several times as a possible version of *collegia causa religionis vel pietatis*. Important steps in the juridical construction of corporations were taken by Pope Innocent IV (1243–1254) in his role as a canonist. For the legists, it was Bartolus of Sassoferrato (1313–1357) who elaborated the definitive doctrine, claiming the general harmlessness and therefore the legitimacy of associations pursuing religious goals.²⁷ Bartolus's statement was the authoritative reference for

unt, quin immo omnia bona, quia religio et divinus cultus realiter in eis observatur." (Assisi, Archivio Capitolare, ms. 80, fol. 5r). An additional *consilium*, by Angelus magistri Francisci de Perusio, *legum doctor* (otherwise unknown) says: "[...] dictas fraternitates posse licite et in pue congregari, dummodo sint fraternitates hominum [...] fidelium et devotorum Dey se congregantium realiter et effectualiter ad cultum divinum iuxta ritum sancte matris ecclesie pro possendo [sic] secrete agere penitencias peccatorum et pro faciendo divina officia ministrari, quia hoc permisit summus pontifex in fine dictarum litterarum." (Assisi, Archivio Capitolare, ms. 80, fol. 5v). The two main *consilia*, by Antonius Aceti and Franciscus de Coppolis, are confirmed also by Angelus de Bernard(is) and Iulianus Bini (for the latter see <http://www.cirfid.unibo.it/irnerio/autori.php>).

27 Bartolus de Saxoferrato, *Commentaria*, vol. 6, on Dig. 47, 22: "Not(a) quod causa religionis collegia sunt permissa de iure communi (ut hic et lex I circa principium, supra: 'Quod cuiuscumque universitatis nomine' [Dig. 3, 4, 1]), et ibi no(ta) unde collegia

the positive judgement on fraternities pronounced by the five Perugian *doctores* mentioned above.

However, considering the long tradition of juristic and historical research on medieval corporation theory it is not necessary to enter into further details here. For our interests, a more specific issue discussed by medieval jurists deserves greater attention, since it is in this perspective that the problem of confraternities as bearers or media of *memoria* comes to the fore. This debate tried to resolve the question, raised by the growing success of the mendicant orders in the thirteenth century and later extended to confraternities and hospitals, whether all these orders, pious groups, and charitable institutions were supposed to pay a tax, the *quarta portio canonica*, to the local bishops and parish priests for the testamentary bequests they received. The juristic discussion about the *quarta* was analysed some time ago by Richard Trexler, who used Florence as his main example.²⁸ What was at risk here for the confraternities and hospitals was perhaps not their existence, but their legal status. The question was whether they were to be classified as a kind of *ecclesiastical* institution (*locus pius*) or as lay groups: in the first case they would have to pay the *quarta portio canonica*, whereas in the second case there would be no obligation to the bishop or the parish priest. The solution depended on the definition of *locus pius*.

Some jurists pleaded for an interpretation of the notion of *locus pius* that would be broad enough to include every association pursuing pious purposes and thereby allow for confraternities to be integrated into the ecclesiastical sphere and subject to episcopal supervision. Others tried to narrow down the semantic extension of *locus pius* in such a way that confraternities would normally be excluded. Construing the argument in this way, they postulated a space of religious action open to laymen without forcing them to enter the terrain of the church. Moreover, these basic positions influenced the answer to the question of whether confraternities, craft guilds, and semi-religious groups (e.g. Third Orders) were comparable to each other and could be analysed as subspecies under the general term of *universitas*, or whether they had to be distinguished. Whereas the advocates of the church were sceptical about the comparability of the different types of associations, their critics emphasized the similarity between them.²⁹ The reason is clear: if confraternities were like craft

disciplinatorum et ista collegia misericordie et similia que pietatem respiciunt sunt approbata de iure communi." See von Gierke, *Das deutsche Genossenschaftsrecht*, 3:192–501; Le Bras, "Confréries chrétiennes," esp. 343; Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies*, 302–313; Michaud-Quantin, *Universitas*, 11–76, 201–231; Canning, "The Corporation in the Political Thought of the Italian Jurists"; Sydow, "Fragen zu Gilde"; Black, *Guilds and Civil Society*, 12–31, whose focus is the debate on craft guilds.

²⁸ Trexler, "The Bishop's Portion."

²⁹ For an episcopal position see the treatise written by the bishop and cardinal Francesco degli Atti, "Tractatus de canonica portione" (attributed to Lapus de Castellione and quoted under this name in Le Bras, *Confréries*, 346–347, while Trexler, "The Bishop's Portion," 354–355, identifies Francesco degli Atti as the author). For the polemic between Francesco and Gallitius de Ancona about the applicability of the notion of *locus pius* to

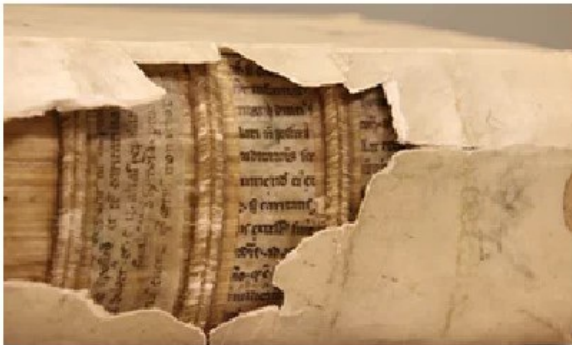
X-rays reveal 1,300-year-old writings inside later bookbindings

Dalya Alberge

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The words of the 8th-century Saint Bede are among those that have been found by detecting iron, copper and zinc – constituents of medieval ink



Fragments of 12th-century manuscripts used to construct a 16th-century bookbinding in Leiden University Library. Photograph: Erik Kwakkel Another example of manuscript fragments in one of Leiden University's books. Photograph: Erik Kwakkel

Medieval manuscripts that have been hidden from view for centuries could reveal their secrets for the first time, thanks to new technology.

Dutch scientists and other academics are using an x-ray technique to read fragments of manuscripts that have been reused as bookbindings and which cannot be deciphered with the naked eye. After the middle ages manuscripts were recycled, with pages pasted inside bindings to strengthen them. Those fragments may be the unique remains of certain works.

Dr Erik Kwakkel, a medieval book historian at Leiden University, told the *Observer*: "It's really like a treasure trove. It's extremely exciting."

Professor Joris Dik, of the Delft University of Technology, described the potential for finding new material with clues to the past as "massive". The technology does not just make hidden texts visible, but legible.

Access to such "hidden libraries" has been made possible by macro x-ray fluorescence spectrometry (MA-XRF), which allows pages to be read without removing the bookbinding.

Bindings made between the 15th and 18th centuries often contain hidden manuscript fragments that can be much older. Bookbinders used to cut up and recycle handwritten books from the middle ages, which had become old-fashioned following the invention of printing. These fragments, described by Kwakkel as "stowaways from a distant past", are within as many as one in five early modern age printed books.

Kwakkel added: "Much of what we're finding is 15th or 14th century, but it would be really nice to have Carolingian material, so from the ninth century or even older. It would be great to find a fragment of a very old copy of a Bible, the most important text in the middle ages. Every library has thousands of these bindings, especially the larger collections. If you go to the British Library or the Bodleian [in Oxford], they will have thousands of these bindings. So you can see how that adds up to a huge potential."

Experiments have found a fragment from a 12th-century manuscript that includes excerpts from the work of Bede, the 8th-century monk and scholar. The researchers were even able to disassemble multiple pages that had been pasted on to one another, making the text legible. In one case, they could read each of three medieval pages that had been glued together. Elsewhere, they found two fragments stuck together underneath the cover of a 16th-century binding.

Dik's team originally developed the technology, in collaboration with others, to "visualise" hidden layers in Old Master paintings. In 2011, for example, they discovered a previously unknown self-portrait by Rembrandt beneath another work. Although faint and unfinished, it dispelled doubts about the surface picture's attribution to the 17th-century Dutch master, to the excitement of art historians.

Now the technology has proved to be "equally efficient in the visualisation of hidden medieval inks," he said. "A thin beam of x-rays is used to scan the object, charting the presence and abundance of various elements below the surface. That is how iron, copper and zinc, the main element constituents of medieval inks, could be viewed, even when covered by a layer of paper or parchment."



Another example of manuscript fragments in one of Leiden University's books. Photograph: Erik Kwakkel

The problem, though, is that the current methodology is painfully slow, with scans sometimes taking more than 24 hours. Faster techniques are being explored. Dik said: "Right now, we've shown that it works."

The research has been subsidised by the Young Academy, a branch of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Last year it emerged that techniques had been developed to decipher ancient papyrus scrolls that were burned black and buried in ash when Mount Vesuvius erupted 2,000 years ago. Vito Mocella, a scientist in

Naples, found that they could read some of the scrolls without unravelling them by peering inside with x-rays.

Referring to Mocella's technology, Dik said: "It's different. The papyrus texts are hidden inside papyrus. We're looking at stuff that is covered by something that is much thicker. Parchment and papyrus are quite different. Parchment is a much thicker, denser material."

comments

- doubledoubt
7h ago

pf cpirse tp ,ale ot jpmet; wprtj tje trpib;e pme ,icj find mot just copies of old material but new texts unknown to scholars == mot any evidence of that from the article - but - i do hope it works our

- hedkandi05
8h ago

I wonder if there is anything more than an intention to post in the binding of a stamp flatly? 💎💎💎💎

- przychodnia
8h ago

Stat rosa pristina nomine, nomina nuda tenemus

- ByTheWindSailor przychodnia
8h ago

I looked it up-
And like your comment.
'The ancient rose remains by its name, naked names are all that we have'.

- stevegalley
9h ago

Makes me realise how much there is still to find out. Exciting times.

- kvms
9h ago

This technology is improving by the year, The way the boffins managed to read an Archimedes

treatise is spectacular. The ink was scraped off hundreds of years ago, written over, and then coated with gold film. They used a grid of pinpoint spectrographs to detect it and now they can read it. That was back in 2005, and it cost millions.

<http://www.lightsources.org/press-release/2005/05/18/archimedes-manuscript-yields-secrets-under-x-ray-gaze>

- ByTheWindSailor
9h ago

Strange to think that we are living in the time when ink on paper became obsolete.

- pohytd ByTheWindSailor
7h ago

Firstly, it's not strange because there's a first time for everything. Secondly, I'll wager that it's far from obsolete.

- UnevenSurface ByTheWindSailor
7h ago

Books are being recycled into packing for smartphones.

- ByTheWindSailor pohytd
7h ago

I'll correct myself, then.

Its strange - to me.

Living in the time when ink on paper began to become obsolete.

- giveusacue
9h ago

It never ceases to amaze me how utterly neat and even the writing was on these ancient manuscripts.

- 9h ago

All without Tipp-Ex too.

- pdianek giveusacue
9h ago

It never ceases to amaze me how utterly neat and even the writing was on these ancient manuscripts.

Some monks were neat and even by nature, especially when doing what they regarded as the work of God. Depending on where the work was done, however, those who were sloppy or inattentive might be punished -- either corporal punishment or by having food withheld or by being ostracised and ignored by others.

- giveusacueGrauniadistan
9h ago

They used to scrape the velum to get rid of their mistakes didn't they? Wonder what sort of monkish language they used when they scraped so hard they made a hole in the velum.

• pohytd
9h ago

You've got to admire their optimism. Painstakingly piecing together fragments of text in the hope that they might find something special. I realise that written texts were less common in ages past but there's probably a reason why this stuff was cut up. Pulp fiction.

• NuitsdeYoung
9h ago

This is really exciting! I read about the Archimedes Codex palimpsest too! It would be really exciting if more 'lost manuscripts' were to turn up!

• pohytd NuitsdeYoung
8h ago

Luckily, 10th century writers were less prolific than their 20th century counterparts.

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Bird 'Bigger Than Plane' Seen In Illinois

BELVIDERE, ILL. —UP— A farmer and a truck driver reported today that they had seen a bird "bigger than an airplane."

They believed it might be a visitor from another planet.

The giant bird was reported by Robert Price and Veryl Babb. Price said he saw it while working near his barn on his farm near Caledonia, Ill.

He said it had a long neck and "what I suppose were its feet trailing behind it."

Price said he and his wife both watched as the "monster bird," flapping its powerful wings, flew off to the northeast.

Babb, a Freeport, Ill., truck driver, reported seeing the bird at a different location the same day.

"I saw the bird but at first I didn't say anything because I thought people would laugh at me," Babb said. "When I read that Price had seen it I decided to report all about it."

"When I spotted the thing it was coasting. It was bigger than an airplane and reminded me of one of those prehistoric monster we learned about when I was in school."

15 Creepiest Ghost Towns

hammerfilms.com

Feature | 21 August 2015

by David Girvan

Where'd everybody go?! We take a look at the 15 creepiest ghost towns from around the world...

1. Pyramiden, Svalbard, Norway

© Mark Marissink

© Huffington Post



Though the Arctic Circle Soviet Town of Pyramiden was deserted over a period of months, it would appear to the curious visitor as if the residents had vanished overnight. Clean sheets lay folded atop beds while plants slowly wilt in windowsills and coal-mining machinery stands stationary

exactly where its operators left it, giving the town an eerie sense of hasty evacuation.

© Wordpress

© Wikimedia Commons

© Neil Cordell



2. Argentiera, Sardinia, Italy

© Paolo Tinti

An ancient silver mine first exploited by the Romans, Argentiera was reopened in the 1800s by a Belgian company called "Società di Corr'e boi". It enjoyed a rich period through the early 1940s, but after WWII the town suffered a decline, with the













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mine eventually closing in 1963.

© Flickr

3. Centralia, Pennsylvania

© Slate

© MSNBC

Most famous for its recent associations with the Silent Hill franchise, Centralia was abandoned en masse in the 1980s after concerns over lethal gases from a 1962 coal mine fire below the city (a fire which still burns today, creepily). A handful of stubborn residents vowed to remain in the nightmarish furnace town, even after a 12 year old boy was swallowed up by a gaseous sink hole in his grandmother's back garden...



© Daily Mail

© Imgur

4. Houses of Sanzhi Pod City, Taiwan

© Design Hey

Before they were finally torn down in late 2008, the Sanzhi Pod City caught the imagination of many

who saw them, gaining the alternating nicknames "UFO Houses" and "ruins of the future". Built in 1978 as a holiday resort aimed at US military personnel, the project was abandoned a mere two years later amid stories of horrific accidents during the site's development.

© Wordpress





© En La Estanteria

5. Copehill Down, Wiltshire, England

Situated on Salisbury Plain in Wiltshire, Copehill Down is a mock-up German village- complete with tank and burnt out cars- built by the Ministry of Defence to train the armed forces in close quarters combat. Erected in 1988 and modelled on a village in the heart of Bavaria, the training ground is still in use today, with additional areas built to resemble modern warzones such as Iraq and Afghanistan.

© Flickr



6. Great Blasket Island, Ireland

© Great Blasket Island



Once home to a small fishing community (as well a surprising amount of notable writers), this small village on Great Blasket Island was abandoned in 1953 when the Irish government declared that it could no longer guarantee the safety of its residents.

© Wordpress

7. The village of Pegrema, Republic of Karelia, Russia

© Wikimedia Commons

Abandoned after the Russian Revolution, the lake-facing wooden houses of Pegrema have since fallen into a beautiful dilapidation.



© Panoramio

8. Kayaköy, southwestern Turkey

© Wikimedia Commons

With the fall of the Ottoman Empire in the early 1920s came the final days of the Greco-Turkish War, and while the war had officially fizzled out by 1922, violence targetting foreigners in both Turkey and Greece was still rife. In an



attempt to stem this flow of nationalistic violence against Turkish inhabitants of Greece and Greeks living in Turkey, both governments signed a deal to effect a large scale "citizen-swap". Thus thousands of Greek Kayaköy residents were forced to leave the Turkish village, which was left uninhabited after the swap took place.

© Flickr

9. Tianducheng, near Shanghai, China

© Daily Mail

The luxury real estate development and Paris doppelgänger Tianducheng failed to



fill a fraction of its accommodation since its construction in 2007, with most of its homes remaining empty. This is thanks in large part to the site's strange location, surrounded by farmland and snaking countryside roads. So for those who think Paris could do with less people and a ramped up chill-factor, Tianducheng is the place for you.

© Photo SF



10. Bodie, California

© Love These Pics

After the discovery of several rich gold veins in 1876, Bodie played host to a huge rush of new inhabitants looking to fill their boots and find their fortune at any cost.



With the Law much slower to make its way to the town, Bodie quickly gained a reputation as one of the most ferocious, violent and lawless in all of America. Those lucky enough to avoid a bullet during their time there were well rewarded for the next four years until 1880, when the bulk of the gold had been mined and the town went into a decline. By 1940 everyone had left, and Bodie was left to ruin.

© Love These Pics

© Wikimedia Commons

11. Novi Cidade de Kilamba, near Luanda, Angola

© Wikimedia Commons



Built in exchange for oil by the Beijing-based CITIC Group in 2011, Angola's Kilamba New City was intended to house up to 500,000 residents from the nearby capital Luanda. However in 2012 and with only 220 of its 2,800 apartments sold, the brightly coloured housing development has remained largely empty, and more than a little eerie...

© BricPlusNews



12. Chaitén, Chile

© Wikimedia Commons

The small Chilean town of Chaitén was evacuated when the nearby volcano erupted for the first time in 9,500 years on 2nd May 2008. Just as well, because ten days later a



pyroclastic mudflow caused the river Blanco's banks to burst, completely flooding Chaitén. Though attempts were made to safeguard the town from future eruptions, the government eventually deemed the town unsafe and the inhabitants were rehoused elsewhere.

© Wikimedia Commons

© Orange Smile

13. Grytviken, South Georgia

© Chris & Chris Break Free

Grytviken was a harbour town and whaling station in South Georgia founded in



1904 by Swedish surveyor John Gunnar Andersson. It has lain abandoned since its closure in 1966.

© Flickr

© Martin Bailey

14. Kolmanskop, Namibia

© When on Earth



In 1908 many starry-eyed travelers laid roots in Kolmanskop, after a large quantity of diamonds were discovered in the surrounding Namibian desert. Construction quickly commenced and soon houses, hospitals, ballrooms, casinos, theatres and ice factories were competing for skyline. The diamond fever continued until World War I, at which point the price of diamonds experienced a considerable drop. A later

find of larger diamonds in the more southerly town of Oranjemund further dented Kolmanskop's popularity, and by 1956 the town was abandoned to the desert sands...

© Amazing Earth

© Martin Bailey

© Martin Bailey



© Factory Media

15. Hashima Island, Japan

© Abandoned Area

© James Bond Lifestyle



Once a thriving coal mining facility, Hashima - also known as Battleship Island - has been unoccupied since 1974, when inhospitable conditions caused the island to be deemed too unsafe to live. At its most populated, 5,000 workers were crammed onto Hashima, making it the most densely populated place on Earth. Today it stands in complete contrast, with not a soul in sight.

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Notebook of Ghosts

Posted on May 15, 2016May 17, 2016by notebookofghosts



Oiwa Ame-onna

Japanese folklore has a long, varied list of ghosts (yurei), demons (oni), and creatures. While Western culture has some pretty vengeful spirits, they are Casper compared to the frightening and torturous spirits of Japan. The female spirits have always interested me, because (frankly) they are pissed and determined. They might suck blood, cut off testicles, or steal children. Below are 17 of the most frightening female spirits I could find.

Onryo

Although this ghost can be male, it is typically female. This is the spirit of a woman that was wronged in life and is out for revenge, killing anyone she can. She appears

as she did at the moment of her death. Some sources say she is powerful enough to cause natural disasters.

Kiyohime

Kiyohime was the daughter of a wealthy man who provided lodging to travelling priests. She fell in love with one priest Anchin. He, being a priest, decided to end the relationship. He left the village on a boat, but she was too angry and scorned to let him go. She jumped in the water and swam furiously towards his boat. While swimming she turned into a serpent (or dragon). When he reached land, the priest ran to a temple and asked for shelter. The other priests told him to hide under a bell. Being a supernatural serpent, Kiyohime found him and coiled around the bell. She shook the bell so hard that it caught fire and melted with Anchin inside.

Yuki-onna

Possibly the spirit of someone who perished in a snowstorm, this female spirit appears in snowstorms to freeze victims to death. She has long black hair and blue lips, and floats above the snow. She can have vampire-like tendencies or freeze men to death during sexual

intercourse.

Yamauba

The Yamauba is the spirit of an old woman marginalized by society and forced to live in the mountains. She eats children. In one tale, she “helped” a pregnant woman give birth, only to steal and eat the newborn.

Uji No Hashihime

The tale goes that a woman scorned by her husband prayed to be turned into an oni (demon) so to kill her husband, his mistress, and their relatives. Mental_floss explains, “To accomplish this, she bathed in the Uji River for 21 days, divided her hair into five horns, painted her body red with vermillion, and went on a legendary killing spree.”

Oiwa



Oiwa

A type of onryo (vengeful ghost). This female spirit was poisoned by her husband, which caused a facial deformity. He had poisoned her so he could marry a wealthy neighbor's granddaughter. She died instantly when she looked into the mirror and saw her droopy face. She haunted her husband for the rest of his life, appearing to him in paper lanterns. She is characterized by a drooping left eye and partial baldness.

Kuchisake-onna

The Kuchisake-onna, or the Slit-Mouthed Woman, is the creation of modern urban legend. She is a malicious spirit of a woman mutilated by her husband. Her mouth is cut from ear to ear, which is covered with a surgical mask. According to legend, she offers

victims a scary choice:

The woman will ask someone “Am I pretty?”. If they answer no, they are killed with a pair of scissors which the woman carries. If they answers yes, the woman pulls away the mask, revealing that her mouth is slit from ear to ear, and asks “How about now?”. If they answer no, she/he will die. If the person answers yes, then she will slit his/her mouth like hers. It is impossible to run away from her, as she will simply reappear in front of the victim. (Wikipedia)

There are theories on how to confuse her when she asks you this deadly question. For example, you might give an ambiguous answer (“You are average”) or you might turn the question around on her (“Do you think I am pretty?”).

Hannya

Women obsessed with jealousy turn into this demon. There are three levels of hannya (from least powerful and most powerful).

1. **Namanari:** These hannya appear as human women with small horns. According to Yokkai.com, “Namanari use dark magic to perform evil deeds such as summoning Ikiryo, a spirit that leaves the body of a living person and haunts other people or places. These demons are not completely evil and still have the opportunity to regain their humanity.”
2. **Chūnari:** This version of hannya has longer horns and fangs. They are more powerful than the Namanari.
3. **Honnari:** This hannya has a snake-like body and breaths fire. Their jealousy is so intense, and thus too powerful to stop.

Hone-onna

Hone-onna, which translates to “Bone Women,” is a being that kills men by taking their life force or holding them until they become skeletons. She can carry a red peony lantern, as two legends tell:

Botan Dōrō tells about a young man named *Ogiwara Shinnojō*, who is wandering around at night and who meets a young woman named O-Tsuyu. She carries a red peony lantern and Shinnojō immediately falls in love with her. Every evening now they meet each other for love and to sleep together. The overly curious neighbour sneaks secretly to the bedroom of the couple to observe them. When the light of the bedroom falls onto the couple the neighbour nearly dies in shock, when he recognizes that the sleeping Shinnojō shares his bed with a moving skeleton.

An orally traditioned legend from Akita prefecture tells the story of a young man who became lost during a heavy snow storm. Suddenly he saw a young woman, carrying a red peony lantern. The woman waved at him and guided the man to her house. When the man wanted to thank her for help, the light of the house and the lantern fell onto her face and the shocked man recognized her face as a blank skeleton skull. (Wikipedia)

Ame-onna



A woman becomes an ame-onna when driven mad by grief when her baby is taken away. She appears in the rain as a raggedly, animal-like woman who licks the rain off her body. She carries a black bag and searches for babies, waiting to hear the cries of babies within homes. Babies stolen by the ame-onna can become ame-onna, along with their mothers. A vicious, scary cycle.

Teke Teke

Teke Teke is the vengeful spirit (onryo) of a young girl who was cut in half by a train after she fell on a railway line. She wanders around earth, pulling her upper body by her elbows or hands and making a “teke teke” sound. If you come across her in the middle of the night,

Ame-onna

run fast. If she can catch you, she'll cut you in half.

Sazae Oni

The Sazae Oni are shape-shifting demon snails that haunt the seven seas. They can change into beautiful women and lure seaman to their demise. According to one legend:

[...] a group of pirates rescued a drowning woman from the sea and took her back to the ship. They vied for her attention, but soon found that she was willing to have sex with all of them, cutting their testicles off afterwards. The men, obviously upset, threw her into the ocean, where she revealed her true form, and bartered with the captain for their testicles back. The Sazae-oni ended up leaving with a large amount of pirate gold. Testicles are sometimes called *kin-tama* or “golden balls” in Japanese, so the punchline goes that gold was bought with gold.

(Wikipedia).

Ubume

When a woman dies during childbirth, but is unable to pass on because of her attachment to her child, she becomes an ubume. They appear on rainy nights, crying and holding a baby child. They are not violent spirits, but are desperate for help.

Ubagabi

Near riverbanks on rainy nights, the Ubagabi appears: a fiery flying ball with the face of an old hag. If this fiery ball touches you, you might die in three years. Yokai.com explains the legend behind this hag ball:

Long ago in Osaka there lived an old woman who was very poor. In order to make ends meet, she resorted to stealing oil from the lamps at Hiraoka shrine — a terrible crime in an age when oil was so rare and precious. Eventually she was caught by the shrine's priests and her crime was exposed. From then on, the people of her village shunned her, and would shout out at her for being an oil thief. So great was the old woman's shame that she went to the pond behind the shrine and committed suicide. Such unclean deaths never turn out well, and instead of dying properly she turned into an yokai. To this day, the pond behind Hiraoka shrine is known by locals as “Ubagabi-ike” (the pond of the ubagabi).

Nure-onna

This vampiric spirit has the head of a woman and the body of a snake. Powerful enough to crush trees, this creatures eat humans. Using her snake-like tongue, she sucks the blood from her victims.

Rokurokubi

There are two types of rokurokubi, ones that have necks that stretch out very long and ones that have removable heads that fly around (nukekubi). They are often female, but can also be

male. They look like humans, but when they fall asleep their necks (or detached heads) roam the land, licking up lamp oil. According to Yokai.com:

Unlike most yokai which are born as monsters, rokurokubi and their close relatives nukekubi are former humans, transformed by a curse resulting from some evil or misdeed. Perhaps they sinned against the gods or nature, or were unfaithful to their husbands. In many cases their husbands or fathers actually committed the sin, but by some cruel twist of fate the men escape punishment and the women receive the curse instead; in all known instances the curse of the rokurokubi affects only women, even though the cause of it may not be their own.

Jorōgumo

This shape-shifting spider can turn into a seductive woman. In her seductress form, she will lure men back to her cottage and serenade them with her flute. While under her musical spell, she wraps her victims in her web for a future meal.

Can't get enough? For a great source for all things Japanese folklore, make sure to check out Yokai.com.

Tagged ,

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New funeral home manager puzzles over 170 abandoned cremains

May 7, 2016

yahoo.com

MONTROSE, Colo. (AP) — The new manager of a Colorado funeral home is trying to find relatives for the cremated remains of about 170 people that were left in the building's basement after going unclaimed.

Matt Boyle said he moved Rose Memorial Parlour into the Montrose building in October and found the cremains during renovations.

Some of the remains have no name and no way to identify who they belong to, or when the person died, he said. Some of them date back to 1947.

Boyle said he wants to locate the relatives, even though it is not his responsibility.

"When we first found it, I felt so overwhelmed," he said. "But we're trying to do the right thing, and I think that's giving these people a dignified committal."

Two state agencies are investigating allegations of fraud and misconduct with a past owner, the Grand Junction Daily Sentinel reported (<http://tinyurl.com/gow5f7q>).

The first business opened in 1931, and a number of mergers and owners have clouded the investigation.

Grand Junction attorney Joe Coleman, who owns the building, said he did not know about the remains until after a previous tenant left.

After Boyle moved in, they learned many of the remains were labeled, and they contacted the local historical society and published the names to try to notify families.

Remains not claimed by May 29 will be included in a multi-denominational service at a cemetery.

Information from: The Daily Sentinel, <http://www.gjsentinel.com>

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Studying 18th-century criminals makes me look at my modern prejudice

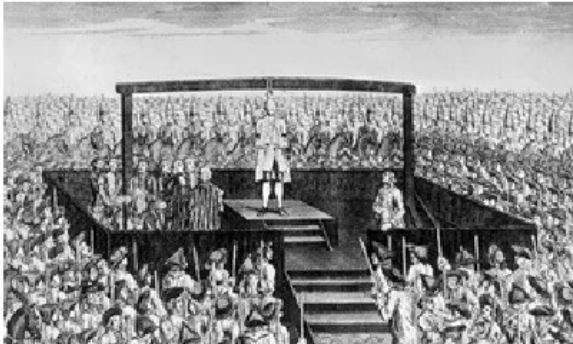
Stephen Basdeo

Monday 14 March 2016 Last modified on Thursday 17 March 2016

theguardian.com

<http://www.theguardian.com/higher-education-network/2016/mar/14/studying-18th-century-criminals-has-made-me-look-at-my-modern-prejudice>

I can empathise with the rogues of the 1700s, and their stories give me a new perspective on present-day crime



Bad life choices could lead vulnerable young men to the gallows, where they were 'launched into eternity'.

Photograph: Hulton Archive/Getty Images

In the last year of my undergraduate history degree I was introduced to one of the most fascinating genres of literature: the 18th-century criminal biography. Tomes such as Charles Johnson's *Lives of the Most Remarkable Criminals* (1734) catalogue the experiences of thieves, rogues and prostitutes. I haven't been able to leave them alone since. And now my enthusiasm for little-known crime writers of the 1700s is being kept alive by my PhD on 18th- and 19th-century literary representations of outlaws and highwaymen.

One of the reasons I love my PhD is that I get to encounter writers like Johnson. Writers who didn't pen sophisticated literature, but can transform the way that we look at the world, both past and present.

In the past, people (for the most part) thought that crime was caused by vice and idleness. If a person disdained employment in favour of trying to make easy money, it was a sign of potential criminality. Look at William Hogarth's *Industry and Idleness* (1747), where a lazy young apprentice eventually ends up at the gallows.

Once a person had turned to crime, went the thinking, it became like an addiction. Take the case of highwayman Nathaniel Jackson, who Charles Johnson says "habituated himself to nothing but wickedness".

Modern historians offer a more nuanced analysis of the causes of crime in this period. Occasional bad harvests, combined with periodic spikes in unemployment, as well as the fact that wages were often low, meant a hand-to-mouth existence for many people. Granted, there were probably some offenders who were incorrigibly bad, but the vast majority who found themselves before the courts had stolen to feed their families.

Many of these thieves would be classed as vulnerable today. One of my favourite 18th-century rogues, Jack Sheppard (1702-1724), was placed as a youth in the care of three different masters, one of whom "used him so harshly that he ran away".

Then there is the case of Captain Stanley (1698-1722) who was physically abused by his father from a young age: "The first rudiments he received were those of cruelty and blood, his father at five years old often parrying him and thrusting him with a sword."

There is also the case of William Sperry, a footpad and highwayman, who was born to very poor parents and then shipped off to America at the age of 14 to work as an indentured labourer.

The deficiencies of the 18th-century justice system meant that each of these offenders found themselves at the gallows, where they were "launched into eternity". But these men were not "wicked" as such, they made bad life choices in precarious social situations.

Today, the media is often guilty of only giving us part of the story when it comes to offenders, and sensationalising accounts of their crimes.

Take the reporting of recent robberies committed near my hometown of Leeds. The writer labels the perpetrator as "a career burglar with a long criminal record for dishonesty". We're not told anything about his social situation and what induced him to turn to crime, other than a reference to the fact that drugs may have been involved. His "crime spree" is described as "targeted".

I have found myself questioning why I am sometimes unable to extend the same empathy towards modern-day criminals that I do to characters such as Jack Sheppard.

And this is why I love my PhD. During the course of my research, I encounter primary and secondary sources that force me to challenge my assumptions about modern-day issues.

This does not mean, of course, that I seek to excuse the actions of thieves and burglars. But society gets the criminals it deserves. It's easy to see this in the cases of offenders from hundreds of years ago, but I keep this in mind now when I read accounts of modern-day robberies. These seemingly irrelevant sources from the past can shine a light, down the centuries, on to our assumptions and prejudices.

comments (6)

• ID4368353

14 Mar 2016 4:34

Have you been mugged? Yes That poor man. How he must have suffered to have done that to you.

• headswapboyID4368353

14 Mar 2016 5:42

Try a dictionary. Look up the word 'nuanced' Now as then simple solutions to complicated problems don't lead to justice.

- blueb0g

14 Mar 2016 16:11

Lovely article. I hope the PhD continues to go well, you've certainly picked a very interesting topic!

- Gaby Wolferink-Schaap

15 Mar 2016 2:57

Wonderful piece! It's so great to see people so passionate about their PhDs and what they learn from it. It's not just the thesis, not just the title, but more importantly it's - I believe - the transformative process that we all go through that makes it worthwhile and that makes us better people, for we know ourselves (a bit) better after this journey if all goes well.

Perhaps this view is more related to social/humanities fields, the same field I'm in, so I recognise this changing view on society and myself with a project focusing on unemployment and welfare reforms, but still, I love this kind of development, and you have worded it eloquently. Thanks for that!

- subtilesubversion

16 Mar 2016 11:27

Class division makes the same type of people either to criminals or to "successful" winners in a dysfunctional society.

- typenotfighter

11 Apr 2016 0:53

The guardian does love its crims.

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Haunted Hull and East Riding: 25 ghost stories for Halloween

May 19th 2016

hulldailymail.co.uk

By Hull Daily Mail | Posted: October 31, 2014

By Brad Rial



GHOST STORIES: Clockwise from top left, the spooky head at The Deep; 'Ghost Boy' at Anlaby Primary School later turned out to be a prank; the George Hotel in Hull is said to be haunted.



Here are 25 Halloween tales of ghosts, UFOs and strange phenomena from across Hull and the

East Riding. Of course, any list like this can only ever scrape the surface of local lore, so tell us your favourite stories and we'll add the best to the list. Comment below, post on our Facebook page or email paul.johnson@hulldailymail.co.uk.

Hull Prison: Ethel Major and the 'White Lady'

She was the last murderer and the only woman to be hanged at Hull Prison. Ethel Major, 43, was executed in 1934, just weeks after being convicted of murdering her husband, Arthur, by lacing his corned beef with lethal poison strychnine.

Her ghost is reported to haunt the prison to this day. She is said to be restless because the authorities forgot where she was buried, although a recent exhibition about the prison proved that was nothing more than a legend.



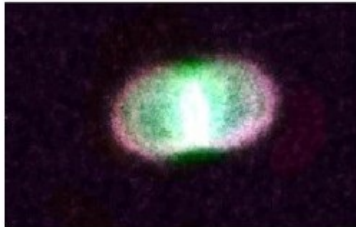
"Seven Alleys" behind the prison is supposedly haunted by a white lady.

Anlaby Primary School: Ghost boy

A spooky picture made headlines in 2010 because it appeared to show a ghostly boy dressed in old clothes standing in front of an old school building being demolished in Anlaby.

The picture was taken outside Anlaby Primary School, built in 1936.

But after being shown the picture by the Mail, paranormal investigators revealed the image was a prank, made on an iPhone app called Ghost Capture.



The Deep, Hull: Disembodied head ghost

A mysterious image of a man appeared in a photograph taken by Emma Place, a visitor to The Deep, in 2008. Although it appears to be a reflection, a study of CCTV footage showed Emma and her family were alone at the time.

Chief executive Colin Brown said at the time: "A couple of years ago, our nightwatchman reported seeing a ghost in TimeLine, the first part of the exhibition. We've had a couple of other comments from staff working at night.

"We asked archives to look at what our land was used for before and although it wasn't our land, very close



by was an old isolation hospital that used to treat victims of smallpox, many coming into the port from abroad."

Greatfield, Hull: Old Mother Riley's Ghost

The legend goes that Old Mother Riley's ghost appeared one night in the 1970s when two policemen witnessed it dancing around Stonebridge playing fields on Greatfield.



Says local historian Mike Covell: "PC David Swift saw a man and two women dancing on Stonebridge Avenue. The following day two reporters from Hull Daily Mail visited the same scene but saw nothing.

"They jokingly wrote, "Wouldn't it be amusing if the dancing male was Arthur Lucan?" and the myth of Old Mother Riley dancing around his grave began."

Hull's most haunted? Annison funeral parlour

Linked to an infamous 19th century murder, the creepy-looking Annison building was once home to a funeral parlour. Staff at a pharmacy, which now occupies part of the site, say they are too frightened to go upstairs on their own.

They've organised a ghost hunt on Halloween (tickets sold out) so people can experience the atmosphere of building, which has changed little since its funeral parlour days, for themselves.



'Underwear-stealing ghosts made my life hell'

Pauline Hickson says "ghosts" made her life a living hell and forced her to move house *seven* times. The mischievous spirits allegedly stole her underwear, used her shower and forced paintings to drop from the wall.

The spirits haunted Pauline for two years, following her from properties in Endike Lane, on Orchard Park and in



west Hull, before they were eventually banished by a so-called "hypno-exorcism".

Legend of the screaming skull: Burton Agnes Hall

The severed head of murdered Lady Anne Boynton is said to be hidden inside the walls of Burton Agnes Hall.

She died violently after being attacked by two beggars and, so the legend goes, asked in her final



moments for her head to be kept at the stately home.

Her wish was ignored, but so many strange incidents followed, her head was removed from her coffin and returned to the hall, where it rests in a secret location.

Even today, there is said to be a benign interested presence from the spirit guardian of the hall whenever changes are being made to the property.



Hull's most haunted pub? The George Hotel

There are a number of candidates for Hull's most haunted pub, but the owners of The George laid their claim when, disturbed by curious goings-on, they called in paranormal experts.

Kevin Conman and Fiona George say music turns itself on and off and they have heard mysterious footsteps in the upstairs rooms. Could renovation work have disturbed the spirits?



The building dates back to the 17th century and has the smallest window in England, reportedly used in the days when the pub was a coaching house.

Police saw UFO over east Hull and Hedon

People who report sightings of UFOs are often called cranks, but it's harder to dismiss a report by two police officers.

Their sighting was revealed in a raft of

UFO documents released by The National Archives.

A Humberside Police report dated October 17, 2002, details how officers saw an object which "appeared as the size of a 'normal' bright star but of different colours – blue, green, red and white", moved fast, stopped and started and changed shape.

The lights, visible for around 45 minutes, were seen with the naked eye at just before 3am from various locations in the Hedon area from a police vehicle.



The report says the officers were not convinced by the explanation provided by the Humberside Police helicopter, that it was "a star or satellite and the colour changes being an optical effect due to possible gasses emitted from the nearby industrial plants".

They were also seen by a Hull resident, who described two lit objects in the sky over east Hull. He stated they appeared to be "communicating" with each other.

UFO over Withernsea?

The UFO files also revealed how irregular patterns of light were spotted over Withernsea in April 1999.

Similar lights were spotted near the town in the years that followed. The Mail reported in August, 2001, how a woman was walking on the clifftop at Holmpton when, on the way back to her car at around 10.30pm, "two extra ordinarily bright white lights" were spotted heading away from Hull and towards the woman.

And in October 2005 a witness reported seeing "exploding lights in the sky" over the seaside town.

'Ghost' on video at the Manchester Arms in Hull

A mysterious spirit that goes by the name of Beryl has been haunting The Manchester Arms pub in Hull. Landlady Lisa Fowler was shocked one night when she spotted something peculiar when checking the CCTV footage.

Says Lisa: "She flickers lights, turns off machines, plays with hair, causes floods and has even been captured on CCTV.

"Sometimes, it feels like someone is running fingers through your hair. Other times, it feels like someone is behind you, but when you turn round, you catch a shadow in the corner of your eye but nothing is there."

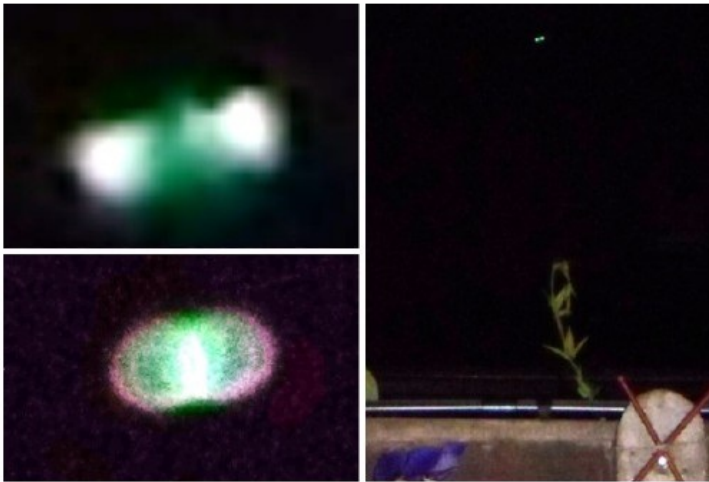
The footage failed to convince everybody, though. Paranormal investigators said they could find no evidence of a haunting. Watch and decide for yourself!

East Hull UFO: Aliens celebrating royal baby ... or Harry Potter's car?

A UFO spotted over Southcoates Lane in east Hull led to much mirth when locals speculated it was everything from ET to Harry Potter's flying car.

Jean Dearing, who spotted the object, said: "I saw what I saw and it was very, very vivid. It was so bright and almost a fan-shaped object, half the size of the moon.

"The object then climbed higher into the sky and disappeared at great speed upwards and out of my sight."



Ghost 'freaks out' staff at Old Star pub in Kilham

Pub landlord Dan Webb often walked over to a gentleman sat at his bar – only to find there was nobody there. The Old Star pub in Kilham, near Driffield, is said to be haunted by a “spiritual” customer.

Mr Webb said his staff were “freaked out” after seeing the figure of a man waiting to be served, and the spirit had even followed him home.

“Some of the things they were saying about the gentleman not wanting to leave did freak me out,” said Dan. “I’d heard of a few ghost stories in other pubs but not experienced anything like this.”

A ghostly monk on Longhill, east Hull?

Ghostly monk sightings, eerie footsteps in an empty building, and equipment going missing from the kitchen and later reappearing ... all at a community centre on Longhill.

It's not clear why the spirit of a monk should be hanging out on the east Hull estate, but the reports were convincing enough for paranormal enthusiasts to investigate the Eastmount Centre back in 2012.

Holy ghostbuster: Exorcist's encounters with spirits

The late Reverend Tom Willis described many spiritual meetings during his career as an exorcist.

He might not have dealt with a levitating demonic child with its head spinning, but Rev Willis said he had certainly experienced the darker side of the spiritual world. He said spirits had thrown things at him, passed through him and insulted him.

“I have carried out several hundred exorcisms over the years,” he told the Mail in 2013. “When I was ordained people came to me about ghosts. Once, someone said their house was haunted and asked me to investigate. That was my first case. It turned out a woman had committed suicide in the house and when I blessed and forgave her, she went away.

“When I started out there was a real fad for ouija boards so I received a lot of calls. I was called once by three huge Hull dockers who had played a ouija board and they just sat there shaking. Strange things had happened to them.”

Among his most notorious cases was the haunting of a policeman's house. He recalled: “At one point, I felt something go right through me. It felt like an electrical shock and it left me rigid.”

UFOs in Bransholme? Files reveal mysterious sightings in skies over Hull

UFOs were spotted in the skies over Bransholme, according to files released by the National Archives.

A beam of light from behind a row of trees was seen spinning around the sky on September 8, 1985. A round object was then reported to have risen from the ground.

It was described as having a circumference the same as a house, with a ring of red lights around its base, each being about one and a half inches in diameter. A humming noise accompanied the light show.

The object was seen heading east across fields from the Bransholme estate, flying at a height of about 50ft.

According to the Ministry of Defence, at the time of the sighting a military exercise involving flares was taking place in the East Yorkshire area.

East Hull poltergeist banished by blessing

A couple got their lives back after an exorcism at their home banished a "poltergeist" which had left them terrified.

They believed the spirits of a murdered young mother and her baby were haunting their house in Chaucer Street, east Hull. But things returned to normal after a visit by the aforementioned exorcist Reverend Tom Willis.

The couple described pictures spinning on the wall and hearing something whisper "coochy coo" to their young child.

Haunted Beverley Minster

It would hardly be a surprise to hear ghost stories about ancient Beverley Minster but Mail columnist and virger Neil Pickford got a shock when he heard "ghostly" voices coming from the quire all day.

He continues: "It turned out that the sound system was completely switched off. Despite this a microphone was still picking up voices and broadcasting them through the rest of the church. Even when the control panel was physically disconnected the voices kept coming."

Disappearing man at the King's Head Hotel

In 1988, a mysterious "man" was spotted in the Kings Head Hotel, Beverley, only for him to disappear almost immediately. The then owner is said to have seen a figure leaning against the fireplace, but on approaching it, found nobody there.

He was convinced that he'd seen a ghost. Years later, the Beverley Star reported how many years ago, a soldier was said to have taken his own life at the pub. Was there a connection?

UFO in close encounter with Lancaster bomber

A UFO was spotted flying above a Lancaster bomber over Withernsea in 2011.

The records show the pilot from the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight was unaware of the black object as he took part in fly-past over the resort.

It was only when a man looked at snaps taken on his digital camera that the UFO was spotted.

Beverley Arms: Woman in red dress scares man into leaving job

According to Peter Robinson's book 'Ghosts and Hauntings in the East Riding', a man who had just

started a job at the Beverley Arms was woken in his hotel room in the middle of the night by a spooky woman in a red dress – who scared him so much it caused him to quit.

He was startled when he woke in the middle of the night to discover the woman standing at the end of his bed.

Driffield: 'Barrow witch' on a blazing broomstick

A famous Driffield wise woman and fortune-teller, Susanna Gore, was known as the “Barrow Witch”. Legend has it that when she died in 1826, at the age of 90, she flew over Driffield Church on a blazing broom.

Kirkburn: A mysterious exorcist

Writing in 1890 folklorist John Nicholson recorded the story of an exorcism in Kirkburn, near Driffield, some decades before. A man had grown sick and his horse had died, and when the kitchen clock began to moan he became convinced he had been bewitched.

A mysterious faith healer called “J.S.” performed an exorcism by reading the Lord's Prayer backwards, before tearing the heart from a living, black hen, puncturing it with pins and burying it. Then, as he chanted to “evil spirits”, he performed a conjuring trick with some “fizzing stuff” that made water boil furiously, and even offered to summon the Devil.

“J.S.” was also credited with “healing” a bedridden woman from Speeton, who was said to be so grateful, she led her friends singing and dancing through Bridlington.

The ghost of Skipsea Castle

The remains of Skipsea Castle are said to be haunted by the ghost of a white lady. It is said that Drogo de la Bouerer, founder of the castle, poisoned his wife there before fleeing to Flanders, leaving the ghost behind. The “white lady” is believed to roam the remains of the castle and the surrounding area, with John Ingram describing her as having a “mournful aspect” in his 1897 book, ‘The Haunted Homes and Family Traditions of Great Britain’.

Counted in and Counted Out: Easington Spirits

It was a custom for some people to sit outside Easington church on Saint Mark's Eve (April 24) to watch the spirits of those about to die in the next 12 months march through the door. The legend does not say what would happen if a watcher saw his or her own spirit walk into the church.

Nearby Easington Hall was said to be the most haunted house in the county before it was demolished in 1887. It was claimed that milk in the dairy turned into blood, and one guest is reported to have heard the footsteps of “many beasts” tramping up and down a staircase all night. (Source: Hidden Holderness Group).

Post by Hull Daily Mail.

4 comments

• albaz | October 31 2014, 7:38PM

Dressing up as Santa or a t this time of year as a Zombie/Witch etc,is a bit of fun.Taking money

from gullible or weak minded people is not. It is bad enough pubs trying to boost trade but charging people to hear childish stories is worse. As for "psychic investigators" they are the modern day readers of tea leaves. Also what qualifications do "investigators" with their boxes of (con)tricks have, a degree in flim-flammy or a doctorate in Klingon maybe?

• EvolvedJonno | October 31 2014, 2:12PM

Some fruitbat stories for the fruitbat ghost believers. Boo.

• hessleroadlad | October 31 2014, 2:05PM

Stimpy. It is because ALL the intelligent people in HULL love and adore The LABOUR Party.

• Stimpy | October 31 2014, 9:17AM

The strangest phenomenon in Hull is :- How does Labour keep getting into power!!!



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Siberian fisherman accidentally nets 4,000-year-old pagan god

BY Carol Kuruville

nydailynews.com

DAILY NEWS BY Carol Kuruville
NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

Wednesday, May 28, 2014, 2:55 PM



(The Siberian Times)

The figure is believed to be an ancient pagan god.

A Siberian man looking for fish accidentally found a god.

Nikolay Tarasov, 53, netted the extraordinary 4,000-year-old figurine while fishing in his hometown of Tisul, in Russia's Kemerovo region.

The small object got tangled in his net and Tarasov was getting ready to chuck it back into the river when he

glanced down to take another look.

That's when he saw a face staring back up at him.

"I stopped and washed the thing in the river and realized it wasn't a stone of an unusual shape, as I thought earlier, but a statuette," the man told the Siberian Times.



Tarasov donated the figure to the Tisul History Museum free of charge.

Tarasov donated the figure to the Tisul History Museum free of charge.

The figure has a grim facial expression and round eyes. On the back, the carver has etched in plaited, wavy hair.

Tisul's History Museum was stunned when Tarasov brought them the find. Experts said it was made out of horn that has fossilized. They have dated it to the Bronze Age and believe it may have belonged to the Okunev or

Samus cultures, a group of people thought to have inhabited Tisul in ancient times.

"Quite likely, it shows a pagan god. The only things we have dated approximately to the same age are a stone necklace and two charms in the shapes of a bear and a bird," said museum

director Marina Banschikova.

Tarasov's hunch about the object turned out to be right, but even he was surprised when he realized how old it was.



(The Siberian Times)

Siberian driver Nikolay Tarasov found the Bronze Age figure while fishing near his home in Tisul, Russia.

"I knew when I looked closely at my find that it must be not even a couple of hundred years old, but older. But I still needed to sit down when the experts told me that this object was carved at the very beginning of the Bronze Age," he said.

The man decided to donate the figure to his local museum free of charge—even though it may be worth more than its weight in gold,

according to the Siberian Times.

"To sell it and make profit? What are you talking about?" asked Nikolay. "People should see it, and learn the history of their region. It was quite clearly precious for the museums of any country."

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Ouija Board: The 5 Strangest Things People Have Done Because the Spirits Told Them To

cultofweird.com



Cult of Weird

By Charlie Hintz on October 29, 2015

Ouija boards have caused people to do some strange things. From murder cases to AWOL military operatives, here is a roundup of the strangest Ouija headlines.



Ouija board facts

The history of the Ouija board is odd and mysterious to say the least. Superstition and paranoia abound wherever the *mystifying oracle* is concerned. As a divination tool in the heyday of spiritualism, the talking board gained popularity when Pearl Curran claimed to have contacted a spirit named Patience Worth, and began writing novels and poetry dictated to her through the board.

It seems the fear and hysteria didn't really begin until *The Exorcist* was unleashed in theaters in 1973. The film was based on the true story of a boy in St. Louis who was believed to be possessed by the devil after using a spirit board he received from his aunt. It seems that before Captain Howdy was

corrupting Regan on the silver screen, however, the Ouija was not commonly perceived as a sinister tool of the devil.

In modern times, it's no secret that opinions tend to be extremely polarized. To some, Ouija is nothing more than a hokey board game that exploits a subconscious muscular reflex called the ideomotor effect. To others, it's a diabolical doorway into the afterlife through which demonic forces can terrorize careless users.

To me, it's nothing more than a piece of wood with a great design and a fascinating history...that may or may not have once fixed my friend's Nintendo one day so we could play *Contra* after countless hours spent fighting the notorious flashing screen. If you were a kid in the 80s, you know the struggle – you try to play game, the screen flashes, you blow in the cartridge, the screen flashes, you summon a demonic entity to fix the NES, the game finally plays, your eternal soul belongs to the devil.

No matter your point of view, one thing is certain: Belief in the power of the Ouija board has caused people to do some pretty damn strange things....

Woman Wills Her Estate to a Spirit

When she died in 1955, Mrs. Helen Down Peck left her \$180,000 estate to a man named John Gale Forbes...whom she had met through her Ouija board many years earlier in 1919, when she and her husband would often commune with the spirits for fun.

Peck believed Forbes was confined to a mental institution somewhere, and had written to many trying to find him. The will stated that if Forbes could not be found, her money was to be put in a trust fund to be used to research mental telepathy for the understanding and care of insane persons.

This newspaper article from 1956 details the odd case.

Ex-Wife Controlled by Ghosts

In 1905, months after his divorce from his ex-wife Mabel, Frank Aulich sued her for custody of their 6-year-daughter. He claimed that Mabel's mind was deranged by her belief in the Ouija board, and that she was being controlled by it.

The April 9, 1905 edition of the Galveston Daily news reported Mr. Aulich's claim that Mabel consulted the board before making any decisions, and that it governed her conduct toward her child and himself.

Gulf Breeze 6

Six NSA military operatives deserted their posts in West Germany on July 9, 1990 because they embarked a new mission to Gulf Breeze, Florida...apparently to prepare for impending war between several alien factions living on, in or around the Earth...as well as the coming of the Antichrist in 1998.

Why? Because an entity called Safire, which they came in contact with through Ouija board sessions, told them to.

The Ouija Murder

In 1930, a 66-year-old Seneca Indian woman named Nancy Bowen, a tribal healer on the Cattaraugus Reservation near Buffalo, bludgeoned another woman to death with a hammer and shoved chloroform-soaked paper down her throat. The woman was Clothilde Marchand, whom Bowen had never met. But a recent Ouija board session had identified her by name as a witch who was responsible for the death of Bowen's husband the previous year. Conveniently, the planchette even provided the witch's home address.

More on that story here: [Tricking tribal healer Nancy Bowen to kill](#)

Ouija Board Retrial

Stephen Young was tried in 1994 for the double murder of newly weds found shot to death in their cottage in Wadworth, East Sussex. The night before the jury gave their verdict, several drunken jurors used a board and an upturned wine glass to consult his victims. When they asked who did it, the board spelled out "Stephen Young done it. Vote guilty tomorrow."

These details came out later, winning Young a retrial and another shot at freedom. The second time around, however, a new jury decided the Ouija was right.

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500 year-old shipwreck loaded with gold found in Namibian desert | Fox News

foxnews.com

By Walt Bonner

Published June 07, 2016



One of the gold coins discovered in the Namibian shipwreck (Dieter Noli) ()

Diamond miners recently discovered a ship that went down 500 years ago after draining a man-made lagoon on Namibia's coast. While shipwrecks are often found along Africa's Skeleton Coast, this one just so happened to be loaded with \$13,000,000 worth of gold coins.

It also answers a centuries-old mystery and is what some archaeologists are calling one of the most significant shipwrecks ever found.

The wreck was first discovered along the coast near Oranjemund by geologists from the mining company De Beers in April 2008. One reason it took centuries to find is because it was underneath the ocean floor.

Related: 19th century boat discovered underneath New Jersey home



gold 1

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Gold coins and a cannon discovered in the Namibian shipwreck (Dieter Noli) ()

"The mining site concerned was actually located in the surf zone, where the violent action of the waves theoretically made mining impossible," archaeologist Dr. Dieter Noli told FoxNews.com. "So what the chaps do is push up a huge sea-wall with bulldozers parallel to the beach, with the ends running back to the beach. The result is a large man-made lagoon, with the surf pounding on the outside. Then they pump the sea-water

out of the lagoon."

It was in this drained lagoon that the wreck was discovered. Noli, who is chief archaeologist of the Southern Africa Institute of Maritime Archaeological Research, wasn't too surprised— with the abundance of shipwrecks on the coast (Portuguese sailors once called it "The Gates of Hell"), he knew the geologists would turn up something sooner or later.

"Having first started doing archaeological work...for the mine in 1996, I had at that point been preaching to them for a dozen years that 'one day' they would find a shipwreck, and to let me know when they do,"

he told Foxnews.com. "When asked what exactly I was *really* expecting to find, I said 'a Spanish sword and a bag of gold.'"



coin beads

Expand / Contract

A coin and rosary beads discovered in the Namibian shipwreck (Dieter Noli). ()

A day after the discovery, the geologists notified Noli that they'd found some 'strange stuff' on the beach— bits of metal, wood, copper half-spheres and what looked like copper or bronze pipes. They emailed him an image of one of the "pipes," which Noli immediately recognized to be a piece of 16th century artillery.

"I phoned [Chief geologist Juergen Jacob] back and told him that said pipes

were in fact rather old breech-loading cannons. 'How old?' he wanted to know. '1535, give or take two months,' I suggested. Since the ship wound up being from 1533, that was a pretty close guess!"

While there are plenty of shipwrecks in the area, almost all of them are "recent"— as in having sunk only in the last 120 years or so. The oldest shipwreck found in the area at that point was *The Vlissingen*, which went ashore in Meob Bay in 1747.



gold 2

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A photo of the Namibian shipwreck site (The De Beers Group of Companies)

Upon his arrival to the site, Noli realized pretty quickly this new find would be the oldest one yet.

"Once [there], the copper half-spheres had me flummoxed," he said. "But then I saw the wooden stock of a matchlock musket lying at my feet. Picking it up, I saw that the style of the stock — made to fit against the cheek, rather than against the shoulder — indicated that it was from the early century, matching the age of the

cannons. Right then I knew that we had a ship from the early 16th century and that there would be a lot to find in very good nick, because if the stock of a musket survived, a LOT of other stuff would have done so as well."

Once they realized what they had on their hands, Noli went about trying to convince the Namdeb Corp. to let them work more on the site— no easy task, considering the huge cost of keeping the site dry for two weeks beyond the mining period and maintaining the sea-wall, which is a 24/7 job for two D-9 dozers, a fleet of trucks and some really huge pumps. In the end, he simply let the pictures of spoils from the dig do the talking.

According to Noli, "As luck would have it, we found the treasure chest on day six. Academic arguments

are all very well, but once you have literally filled your hat with an 25.5 lb mixture of Spanish and Portuguese gold coins (there were indeed swords as well), the value of the site is no longer in doubt."

The ship was identified as *The Bom Jesus*, or "The Good Jesus", a Portuguese ship that went missing 500 years ago while en route to India. The ship was loaded down with gold, tin, ivory tusks, and 44,000 pounds of copper ingots when it apparently went to its watery grave. In fact, it was the copper ingots that ended up playing a key role in the wreck's preservation.

"Marine organisms may like wood, leather book covers, peach pips, jute sacking and leather shoes, but copper really puts them off their food – so a lot of stuff survived the 500 years on the bottom of the sea which should really not have done so," Noli said. "All this adds up to an extremely unusual situation, which led to truly excellent preservation of an in any event unique site."

How the ship went down and what it was doing off a notorious stretch of coast famous for its storms and fog remains unknown, though Noli has his theories.

He believes that a combination of too much heavy cargo and poor weather made the captain decide to run the vessel ashore by putting out his bow anchors and slowly beaching her. The ship then hit a blinder in the surf zone, where she heeled over in the pounding waves. All attempts to free her failed and she broke up, starting with the superstructure.

"The treasure chest fell free from the captain's cabin, sinking intact to the seabed, where it was subsequently crushed, pinned down and protected by a massive piece of the side of the ship which broke free from the disintegrating hull," Noli theorized.

As for what it was doing off the coast, he's hoping Portuguese records may shine some light on the matter.

So who gets the gold?

"The Namibian government – every single coin," he said. "That is the normal procedure when a ship is found on a beach. The only exception is when it is a ship of state – then the country under whose flag the ship was sailing gets it and all its contents. And in this case the ship belonged to the King of Portugal, making it a ship of state – with the ship and its entire contents belonging to Portugal. The Portuguese government, however, very generously waived that right, allowing Namibia to keep the lot."

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500-year-old Romeo And Juliet prop found in dig at Shakespeare's Curtain Theatre

09:56, 18 May 2016 Updated 12:38, 18 May 2016 By Rachel Bishop

mirror.co.uk

500-year-old Shakespeare prop used in early performances of Romeo and Juliet found in Curtain Theatre dig



MOLA

Archaeologist Paul McGarrity holds a 16th century bird whistle - a possible sound effect discovered at the Curtain Theatre dig

Archaeologists have unearthed a 500-year-old Shakespeare prop they believe were used in early performances of Romeo and Juliet.

Fragments of a ceramic bird whistle, dating from the late 16th century, were discovered during excavation works at The Curtain Theatre in the capital - led by the Museum of London Archaeology (MOLA).

The team is digging at the site in Shoreditch, east London - one of Shakespeare's least

documented playhouses and where he premiered Henry V.

His troupe, The Lord Chamberlain's Men, used The Curtain as its base from 1597-1599 and Romeo And Juliet was performed there.



MOLA

A 16th century bird whistle from the Curtain Theatre

Experts broke ground in April and are hoping to excavate through 18th-century remains to uncover the 16th and 17th-century Curtain Theatre which is two to three metres below modern ground level.



MOLA

Animal bone comb perhaps used by actors backstage at the Curtain Theatre

Since starting the dig they have found that the building appears to have been rectangular measuring approximately 22m by 30m, rather than being polygonal.

Archaeologists also discovered an animal bone comb, which is believed to have been used by actors backstage at the Curtain Theatre.

A view of the City of London from

the north in an engraving by Abram Booth from 1599

Walls of up to 1.5 metres high survive in places, the team said, and it has been able to identify the



MOLA

courtyard, where theatregoers stood, and the inner walls, which held the galleries where wealthier audience members would have sat.

The bird whistle found "may have been used for sound effects in theatrical performances," the team's blog said.

Archaeologists record the remains of the Curtain Theatre

Read more: Headmaster claims reading Harry Potter books makes children MENTALLY ILL

Bird whistles were used as children's toys at the time but in Romeo And Juliet, staged at the Curtain Theatre in the late 16th century, there are numerous references to bird song, such as "That birds would sing and think it were not night".

MOLA archaeologist Sarah Trehy excavating the well-preserved remains of Shakespeare's Curtain Theatre

Once the detailed dig is complete, the remains of The Curtain will be preserved in-situ, and artefacts discovered and records taken during the excavation brought back to Mola to be studied in detail by specialists.



MOLA



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Sightings of eight-foot werewolf known as Old Stinker spark panic across city

03:25, 15 May 2016

thesun.co.uk

Sightings of eight-foot werewolf known as Old Stinker spark panic across city

Residents in Hull report seeing the beast on SEVEN recent occasions

A SURGE in sightings of an eight-foot werewolf known as Old Stinker has sparked panic across a city.

Residents in Hull, East Yorks. have reported seeing the beast on SEVEN separate recent occasions.

Locals claim to have spotted the creature on the loose in an abandoned industrial area outside the city, which they fear has now become its habitat.

The Sunday Express reports that locals fear the beast could be a figure from local folklore called Old Stinker.

A centuries-old legend states that the foul-breathed creature prowls the Yorkshire Wolds.

Sightings have picked up recently since the creature was first spotted late last year near Barmston Drain, a water channel built in 1798 to dry out salt marshes.



Hull

Hull residents are scared that the fearsome wolf is claiming the area as its territory Getty

One eyewitness claimed to have seen it morph from a man to a wolf as she watched from a bridge above.

She said: "It was stood upright one moment. The next it was down on all fours running like a dog. I was terrified.

"It bounded along on all fours, then stopped and reared up on to its back legs, before running down the embankment towards the water.

"It vaulted 30ft over to the other side and vanished up the embankment and over a wall into some allotments."

Another couple claimed they had seen something "tall and hairy" eating a dog next to the Drain, whilst a different dog walker reportedly clocked a "half-man, half-dog" in the area.

She added that her dog was too terrified to continue down the path and started shaking uncontrollably after the suspicious sighting.

With locals gearing up to go on a werewolf hunt with cameras and recording equipment at the next moon, even the local council has got involved.

Councillor Steve Wilson offered to keep an incident log, saying: "I am happy to keep a diary of sightings by people around here and report them to Hull Council."

Although nobody has managed to catch the creature on camera, residents believe it may be a legendary



wolf

beast called Old Stinker Getty

Charles Christian, author of *A Travel Guide To Yorkshire's Weird Wolds*, says that the recent sightings in the area come in a long line of wolf-related scares.

He said: "The Yorkshire Wolds was actually one of the last parts of England to have wild wolves.

"Old Stinker was said to be operating on the other side of them but it would be no distance at all for a large animal to get to Hull."

"When you get multiple sightings combined

with a tradition of stories going back centuries it is hard to ignore the possibility something might be there."

Meanwhile, supernatural expert Mike Covell was called in by concerned locals to check out the rumours.

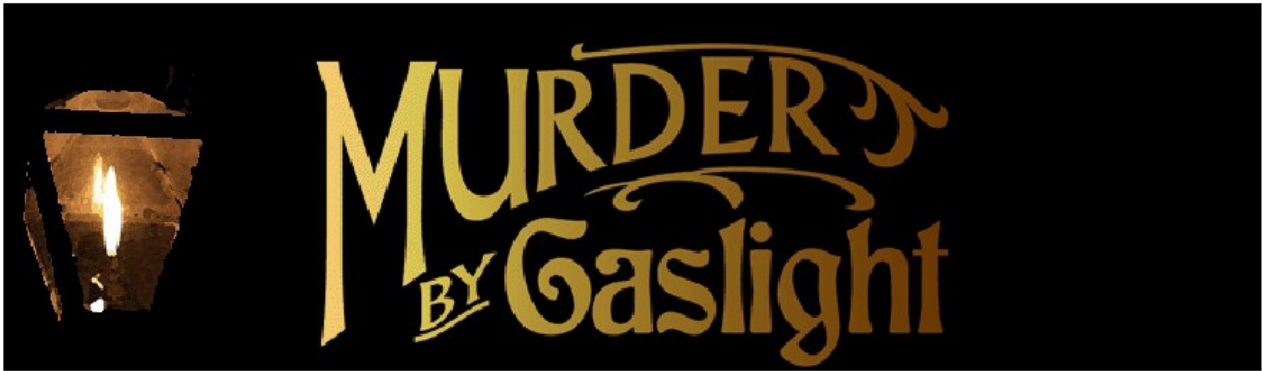
He said: "I was sceptical at first, but then more and more people contacted me saying they had seen the same thing.

"No one really knows what to do. You can hardly pop down the local council office or police station and say you'd like to report a werewolf."

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Getty



A compendium of information, resources and discussion on notable nineteenth century American murders.

Saturday, April 30, 2016

A Boy Murderer.

4 comments



11-year-old John Wesley Elkins (who went by Wesley) got out of bed around 2 a.m. on July 24, 1889, went outside the family's Iowa farmhouse and down to the road to make sure no one coming. On his way back to the house he stopped at the corncrib a picked up a club—a heavy piece of a wooden flail—and brought it back to his bedroom. Wesley took

down an old muzzle-loading rifle that was hanging on the kitchen wall, loaded the rifle, then went into the room where his father, stepmother, and infant half-sister were sleeping. He put the barrel of the gun near his father's head and pulled the trigger. Knowing he did not have time to reload the rifle, Wesley went to his room and got the club. Then as his stepmother was leaning over his father, trying to understand what had happened, he beat her to death with the club.

Wesley took the infant, splattered with blood, out of the room, and cleaned and dressed her. Then he hitched up the buggy and started for his grandfather's house, stopping on the way to tell the neighbors that an assassin had murdered his parents; he had taken the baby and fled for their lives.

The neighbor went to the Elkins's house where they found the bodies of 45-year-old Mr. Elkins and his 25-year-old wife. Mr. Elkin's head had been blown to pieces, and Mrs. Elkin's head was beaten to a jelly. They sent for the police where were immediately skeptical of the Wesley's story.



Wesley Elkins, around the time of the murder

Under questioning in Mason City, Iowa, Wesley quickly broke down and told the police the whole story. His reasons, however, did not seem to fit the severity of the crime. Wesley had been unhappy at having to care for his half-sister so often and wanted to set out on his own. He had run away from home several times but each time was brought back. He thought his only way out was killing his parents. Wesley was slight of stature—four feet eight inches tall, weighing 73 pounds—and had never caused trouble. He was intelligent and well-spoken as he calmly told his story. Some believed Wesley incapable of such a deed and thought he was covering for someone else.

John Wesley Elkins was indicted for first-degree murder. At his trial the following January,



Wesley Elkins, after his release.

Wesley pleaded guilty and told his story once again. Judge Hoyt sentenced him to life at hard labor in Anamosa State Penitentiary.

Wesley was believed to be the youngest person to date to be sent to prison in America, and his life sentenced prompted heated arguments. Some felt that no 11-year-old boy belonged in prison regardless of the crime, others felt that Wesley should be sent to the gallows.

Wesley Elkins used his time wisely while at Anamosa. He worked at the prison library and at the chapel and became proficient with the written and spoken word. In 1902, twelve years into Wesley's sentence, after bitter debate Governor Cummins issued him parole papers. Wesley left the prison a free man.

Following his release, Wesley led a full life. He first settled in St. Paul, Minnesota where he worked on the railroad. Then in 1922, he married a Hawaiian woman in Honolulu. Eventually, he became a farmer in San Bernardino, California, where he resided until his death in 1961.

Sources:

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"Double Murder by a Boy." *New York Herald* 27 Jul 1889.

"Murdered his Father and Mother." *Daily Illinois State Register* 27 Jul 1889.

Anamosa State Penitentiary: The Strange Case of Wesley Elkins.

"To Prison For Life." *Kalamazoo Gazette* 23 Jan 1890.

"Wesley Elkins." *Wheeling Register* 13 Jan 1890.

Posted by Robert Wilhelm

4 comments :

Tish says:

April 30, 2016 at 11:04 PM

Great story.

Tish says:

April 30, 2016 at 11:05 PM

Great story.

mycatisaudrey says:

May 1, 2016 at 10:49 AM

Such an interesting story. It would've been easier to kill the baby instead of his parents, so he obviously saw it as innocent. I wonder if his parents were also abusive in some way, making him less sympathetic towards them.

Adeline the Strange says:

May 2, 2016 at 12:05 AM

He seems to fit the profile of the 'callous unemotional' type adolescent rather than an abused kid, though.

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A brief history of the Vikings

Wednesday 25th May 2016

historyextra.com



They are often portrayed merely as one-dimensional warriors whose achievements include little more than plundering and raiding. But, as



Philip Parker explains, this was not the full extent of the Viking world...



Coins depicting Viking longships, probably minted at Hedeby, Denmark, found in the Viking marketplace at Birka, Sweden. (Photo by Werner Forman/Universal Images Group/Getty Images)

In 793, terror descended on the coast of Northumbria as armed raiders attacked the defenceless monastery of St Cuthbert on Lindisfarne. The terrified monks watched helplessly as the invaders made off with a haul of treasure and a clutch of captives. It was the first recorded raid by the Vikings, seaborne pirates from Scandinavia who would prey on coastal communities in north-western Europe for more than two centuries and create for themselves a reputation as fierce and pitiless warriors.

That image was magnified by those who wrote about the Viking attacks – in other words, their victims. The Anglo-Saxon cleric Alcuin of York wrote dramatically of the Lindisfarne raid that the “church was spattered with the blood of the priests of God, despoiled of all its ornaments... given as a prey to pagan peoples” and subsequent (mainly Christian) writers and chroniclers lost few opportunities to demonise the (mainly pagan) Vikings.

Yet, though they undeniably carried out very destructive and violent attacks, from small-scale raids against churches to major campaigns involving thousands of warriors, the Vikings formed part of a complex and often sophisticated Scandinavian culture. As well as raiders they were traders, reaching as far east as the rivers of Russia and the Caspian Sea; explorers, sending ships far across the Atlantic to land on the coastline of North America five centuries before Columbus; poets, composing verse and prose sagas of great power, and artists, creating works of astonishing beauty.

Viking origins

The Vikings originated in what is now Denmark, Norway and Sweden (although centuries before they became unified countries). Their homeland was overwhelmingly rural, with almost no towns. The vast majority earned a meagre living through agriculture, or along the coast, by fishing. Advances in shipping technology in the 7th and 8th centuries meant that boats were powered by sails rather than solely by oars. These were then added to vessels made of overlapping planks ('clinker-built') to create longships, swift shallow-drafted boats that could navigate coastal and inland waters and land on beaches.

Exactly what first compelled bands of men to follow their local chieftain across the North Sea in these longships is unclear. It may have been localised overpopulation, as plots became subdivided to the point where families could barely eke out a living; it may have been political instability, as chieftains fought for dominance; or it may have been news brought home by merchants of the riches to be found in trading settlements further west. Probably it was a combination of all three. But in 793 that first raiding party hit Lindisfarne and within a few years further Viking bands had struck Scotland (794), Ireland (795) and France (799).

Their victims did not refer to them as Vikings. That name came later, becoming popularised by the 11th century and possibly deriving from the word *vik*, which in the Old Norse language the Vikings spoke means 'bay' or 'inlet'. Instead they were called *Dani* ('Danes') – there was no sense at the time that this should refer only to the inhabitants of what we now call Denmark – *pagani* ('pagans') or simply *Normanni* ('Northmen').



The remains of a Viking longship found at Gokstad in South Norway, c1920. (Photo by Rischgitz/Getty Images)

Raids

At first the raids were small-scale affairs, a matter of a few boatloads of men who would return home once they had collected sufficient plunder or if the resistance they encountered was too strong. But in the 850s they began to

overwinter in southern England, in Ireland and along the Seine in France, establishing bases from which they began to dominate inland areas.

The raids reached a crescendo in the second half of the ninth century. In Ireland the Vikings established *longphorts* – fortified ports – including at Dublin, from which they dominated much of the eastern part of the island. In France they grew in strength as a divided Frankish kingdom fractured politically and in 885 a Viking army besieged and almost captured Paris.

In Scotland they established an earldom in the Orkneys and overran the Shetlands and the Hebrides. And in England an enormous Viking host, the *micel here* ('great army') arrived in

865. Led by a pair of warrior brothers, Halfdan and Ivar the Boneless, they picked off the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms of England one by one. First Northumbria, with its capital at York, fell to them in 866, then East Anglia, followed by the central English kingdom of Mercia. Finally, only Wessex, ruled by Alfred, remained. A pious bookworm, Alfred had only become king because his three more martial older brothers had sickened or died in battle in previous Viking invasions.

In early January 878 a section of the Great Army led by Guthrum crossed the frontier and caught Alfred by surprise at the royal estate at Chippenham. Alfred barely managed to escape and spent months skulking in the Somerset marshes at Athelney. It looked like the independence of Wessex – and that of England generally – might be at an end. But against the odds Alfred gathered a new army, defeated the Vikings at Edington and forced Guthrum to accept baptism as a Christian. For his achievement in saving his kingdom he became the only native English ruler to gain the nickname 'the Great'.

For 80 years England was divided between the land controlled by the kings of Wessex in the south and south-west and a Viking-controlled area in the Midlands and the north. Viking kings ruled this region until the last of them, Erik Bloodaxe, was expelled and killed in 954 and the kings of Wessex became rulers of a united England. Even so, Viking (and especially Danish) customs long persisted there and traces of Scandinavian DNA can still be found in a region that for centuries was known as the Danelaw.

By the mid-11th century united kingdoms had appeared in Denmark, Norway and Sweden and the raids had finally begun to subside. There was a final burst of activity in the early 11th century when royal-sponsored expeditions succeeded in conquering England again and placing Danish kings on the throne there (including, most notably, Canute, who ruled an empire in England, Denmark and Norway, but who almost certainly did not command the tide to go out, as a folk tale alleges). Vikings remained in control of large parts of Scotland (especially Orkney), an area around Dublin and Normandy in France (where in 911 King Charles the Simple had granted land to a Norwegian chieftain, Rollo, the ancestor of William the Conqueror). They also controlled a large part of modern Ukraine and Russia, where Swedish Vikings had penetrated in the ninth century and established states based around Novgorod and Kiev.



Silver penny of King Alfred. The reverse of this coin bears a monogram made up of the letters of LVNDONIA (London), possibly to commemorate the recovery or restoration of London after its occupation by

the Danes. (Photo by Museum of London/Heritage Images/Getty Images)

Settlements

This was not the full extent of the Viking world, however. The same maritime aggression that had caused them to plunder (and ultimately conquer) settled lands also led them to venture in search of unknown shores on which to settle. Vikings probably arrived in the Faroes in the eighth century and they used this as a stepping-stone to sail further west across the Atlantic.

In the mid-ninth century a series of Viking voyages came across Iceland and in the year 872 colonists led by Ingólf Arnarson settled on the island. They established a unique society, fiercely independent and owing no formal allegiance to the kings of Norway. It was a republic whose supreme governing body was, from 930, the Althing, an assembly made up of Iceland's chief men which met each summer in a plain beside a massive cleft in a ring of hills in the centre of the island. It has a strong claim to be the world's oldest parliament.

From Iceland, too, we have other vital pieces of evidence of the inventiveness of Viking societies. These include the earliest pieces of history written by Vikings themselves in the form of a 12th-century history of Iceland, the *Íslendingabók*, and the *Landnámabók*, an account of the original settlement of the island (with the names of each of the first settlers and the land they took).

But more important – and surprising for those who view of the Vikings as one-dimensional warriors – is the collection of sagas known as the *Íslendingasögur* or *Icelandic Family Sagas*. Their setting is the first 150 years of the Viking colony in Iceland and they tell of often-troubled relations between the main Icelandic families. Alliances, betrayals, feuds and murders play out against the backdrop of a landscape in which features can still often be identified today. At their best, in tales such as *Njáls Saga* or *Egil's Saga*, they are powerful pieces of literature in their own right, and among the most important writing to survive from any European country in the Middle Ages.

Religion

Iceland was the location of another drama that highlights the transition of Viking societies away from warrior chieftainships. Christianity came later to Scandinavian Viking societies than to many other parts of Europe. Whereas France's kings had accepted Christianity by the early sixth century and the Anglo-Saxon kings of England largely in the seventh, Christian missionaries only appeared in southern Scandinavia in the ninth century and made little headway there until Harald Bluetooth of Denmark accepted baptism in around 960. Harald had become Christian after a typical piece of Viking theatre: a drunken argument around the feasting table as to which was more powerful – Odin and Thor, or the new Christian God and his son, Jesus.

Iceland remained resolutely pagan, loyal to old gods such as Odin; the All Father; a one-eyed god who had sacrificed the other eye in exchange for knowledge of runes; and Thor, the thunder-god with his great hammer Mjölnir, who was also especially popular with warriors.

Iceland became Christian to avoid a civil war. Competing pagan and Christian factions threatened to tear the Althing apart and dissolve Iceland into separate, religiously hostile, states. At the Althing's meeting in the year 1000 the rival factions appealed to Iceland's most important official, the lawspeaker Thorgeir Thorkelsson. As a pagan he might have been expected to favour the old gods but, after an entire day spent agonising over the decision, he concluded that henceforth all Icelanders would be Christian. A few exceptions were made – for example the eating of horsemeat, a favoured delicacy that was also associated with pagan sacrifices, was to be permitted.



Detail of a stone relief representing the divine triad: Odin (the chief god in Norse mythology), Thor (god of thunder) and Freyr (god of fertility). Gotland, Sweden. Image c1987. (Photo By DEA/G DAGLI ORTI/De Agostini/Getty Images)

Explorations

Iceland, too, was the platform from which the Vikings launched their furthest-flung explorations. In 982 a fiery tempered chieftain, Erik the Red, who had already been exiled from Norway for his father's part in a homicide, was then exiled from Iceland for involvement in another murder. He had heard rumours of land to the west and, with a small group of companions, sailed in search of it. What he found was beyond his wildest imaginings. Only 300 kilometres west of Iceland, Greenland is the world's largest island, and its south and south-west tip had fjords [deep, narrow and elongated sea or lakedrain, with steep land on three sides] and lush pastures that must have reminded Erik of his Scandinavian homeland. He returned back to Iceland, gathered 25 ship-loads of settlers and established a new Viking colony in Greenland that survived into the 15th century.

Erik's son, Leif, outdid his father. Having heard from another Viking Greenlander, Bjarni Herjolfsson, that he had sighted land even further west, Leif went to see for himself. In around 1002 he and his crew found themselves sailing somewhere along the coast of North America. They found a glacial, mountainous coast, then a wooded one, and finally a country of fertile pastures that they named Vinland. Although they resolved to start a new colony there, it was – unlike either Iceland or Greenland – already settled and hostility from native Americans and their own small numbers (Greenland at the time probably had about 3,000 Viking inhabitants) meant that it was soon abandoned. They had, though, become the first Europeans to land in (and settle in) the Americas, almost five centuries before Christopher Columbus.

For centuries Erik's achievement lived on only in a pair of sagas, *The Saga of the Greenlanders* and *Erik the Red's Saga*. The location of Vinland, despite attempts to work out where it lay from information contained in the sagas, remained elusive. It was even unclear if the Vikings really had reached North America. Then, in the early 1960s, a Norwegian explorer Helge Ingstad and his archaeologist wife, Anne Stine, found the remains of ancient houses at

L'Anse aux Meadows on Newfoundland in Canada. Fragments of worked iron (many of them nails, probably from a ship), which the native population did not possess the technology to produce, meant that it was soon clear this was a Viking settlement. Although perhaps too small to be the main Vinland colony, it was still astonishing confirmation of what the sagas had said. Leif Erikson's reputation as a great explorer and discoverer of new lands was confirmed without doubt.

This might well have pleased him, for a man's reputation was everything to a Viking. Quick wit, bravery and action were among the key attributes for a Viking warrior, but to be remembered for great deeds was the most important of all. The *Hávamál*, a collection of Viking aphorisms, contains much apt advice such as "Never let a bad man know your own bad fortune", but most famous of all is the saying "Cattle die, kindred die, we ourselves shall die, but I know one thing that never dies: the reputations of each one dead".

The reputation of the Vikings simply as raiders and plunderers has long been established. Restoring their fame as traders, storytellers, explorers, missionaries, artists and rulers is long overdue.

Philip Parker is author of *The Northmen's Fury: A History of the Viking World* (Vintage, 2015). For more information, visit www.philipparker.net

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Canal Street sinkhole a 'catastrophic failure', will take 6 months, \$5M to fix

By Robert McClendon, NOLA.com | The Times-Picayune | Follow on Twitter on April 29, 2016 at 7:38 PM, updated April 29, 2016 at 7:43 PM

nola.com

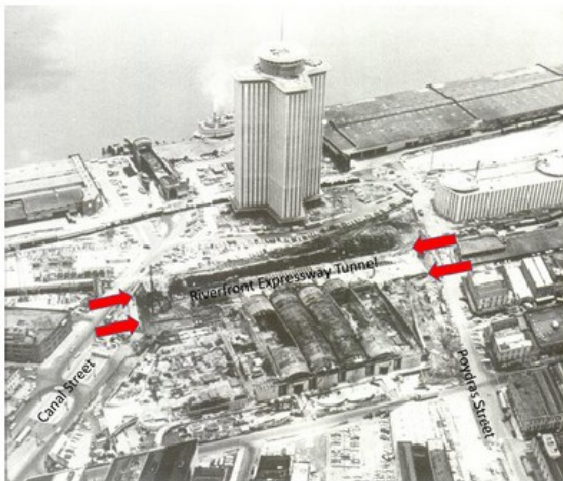
A sinkhole that opened up at the foot of Canal Street Friday (April 29) will take up to six months and \$5 million to repair, city officials said.

The collapse, which caved in a 30-foot-wide section of one of New Orleans' busiest streets, happened just a few feet away from the spot where Mayor Mitch Landrieu and his infrastructure team had been standing hours earlier in a 50-year-old tunnel that runs underneath the road.

The team was on site to inspect one of the tunnel's walls, which had begun to buckle earlier this month, allowing water to spill in. A few hours after they left, the wall collapsed, taking the road along with it.

"This is nothing short of incredible," Landrieu said. "Unfortunately, it's not a surprise," given the city's creaking infrastructure and unstable soil, he said. "Still, I've never seen anything like it."

The tunnel was constructed in the 1960s as part of an abandoned plan to build a six-lane, elevated Riverfront Expressway that would have run alongside the French Quarter, connecting Elysian Fields Avenue to the West Bank. The expressway never happened, but the idea wasn't scrapped until after the city had already built the tunnel section, which runs between Canal and Poydras streets.



Tunnel vision: In 1966, New Orleans built a tunnel downtown hoping the traffic would come

Tunnel vision: In 1966, New Orleans built a tunnel downtown hoping the traffic would come

The little-known chamber is a relic of an era of transportation modernization after World War II.

On the Uptown side of Canal Street, which runs directly over the tunnel, tour buses continued to trundle along as normal. On the downtown side, visitors gawked at the crumbling pit that had opened up at the tunnel's northern end.

Officials said repairs will begin immediately, but it's possible the sinkhole could continue to grow. The tunnel itself, part of which has been converted into valet parking for Harrah's Casino, was not thought to be in immediate danger, they said.

The 700-foot-long, 98-foot-wide tunnel was built from concrete supported by steel I-beams. Well mostly. Its two ends were capped with a "temporary wall" made of wood. The curtains were meant to be reopened when the rest of the expressway was constructed.

When the federal government scrapped the expressway plan in 1969, nobody bothered to dig up Canal Street and fill in the tunnel's end with something more durable.

Time, meanwhile, began to take its toll. Water lines leaked. Drainage culverts running under Canal Street did likewise.

Canal Street sinkhole collapse A giant sinkhole opened on Canal Street across from Harrah's Casino and adjacent to an old underground tunnel Friday April 29, 2016.

Earlier this month, the city discovered that the temporary wall was buckling. Fearing a collapse, it shut down the lake-bound, lanes of Canal Street so engineers could investigate the problem and begin

planning repairs.

Those repairs didn't come in time.

The timber wall, visible from the street through the massive sinkhole, didn't look more than a few inches thick. Braced by steel beams only every 10-15 feet, an entire section had given way.

"Evidently, there was a massive leak. That leak seeped into the ground and compromised" the temporary wall, Landrieu said.

Landrieu attributed the leak to damage leftover to the city's water system after Hurricane Katrina. "We have about 40 percent of our water bleeding out of our pipes under the city of New Orleans," he said.

Landrieu asked for patience as the city works to repair the street, which will require the "temporary" wall to be replaced with something stronger than wooden sheets.

"This is not a short term fix. This is a three- to six-month fix. It's a major infrastructure breach that has to be repaired and it's going to be expensive," he said.



Robert

McClendon, NOLA.com | The Times-Picayune



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The odd story of a crow that meddled in a crime scene — by stealing a knife

By Karin Brulliard
May 27

washingtonpost.com

The Washington Post



Canuck the crow, pictured in January with a knife. The crow picked up a different knife at a tense crime scene this week. (Shawn Bergman)

A very strange crime scene played out in Vancouver, British Columbia, this week. It involved more than 20 police officers, a man accused of wielding a knife, and a crow seen stealing the knife.

According to local media reports, police responded Tuesday afternoon to a car that was on fire in a McDonald's parking lot on the city's east side. Once there, a police statement said, a man confronted officers with a knife, and they shot him. He was treated for gunshot and knife wounds that were not life threatening, according to the Vancouver Courier.

[This man lived as a goat for nearly a week. We asked him why.]

So there was no murder, and there was no murder of crows. But there was one crow, and witnesses said it swooped down, used its claws to pick up the knife and then flew away. One of the officers on the scene "was forced to chase down" the bird, which dropped the knife a few feet later and also "tried to make off with a pair of eyeglasses in the lot and steal gear belonging to a television camera operator," Courier reporter Mike Howell wrote.

Watched this crow pick up knife allegedly used by man shot by #VPD today. Cops chased him before dropped knife. pic.twitter.com/lkycixAC5b

— Mike Howell (@Howellings) May 25, 2016

Was this bird a crow-conspirator, trying to remove incriminating evidence?

Nope. A red plastic band around its left leg quickly identified it as east Vancouver's most famous crow, Canuck. Canuck has a Facebook page devoted to him that had more than 14,000 followers as of Thursday night, as well as starring roles in a few YouTube videos. The man who runs the Canuck and I Facebook page, Shawn Bergman, said the bird fell out of its nest as a chick and was rescued and rehabilitated by his landlord's son (Bergman lives in the

basement). That was in May 2015.

[Love in the time of climate change: Grizzlies and polar bears are now mating]

Two months later, Bergman said, Canuck was released into the urban wild. But “for some reason,” Bergman said, “he just imprinted me as a best friend.” (Everyone refers to Canuck as a he, though his gender is not known; Bergman said he is going to send feathers to a DNA lab to settle the matter.)



Canuck with his “best buddy,” Shawn Bergman. (Courtesy of Shawn Bergman)

Before his cameo at the crime scene, the corvid had become known for attacking a cyclist, riding the train, communing inside cars with people, attending horseraces and helping in gardens. “But he seems to also have developed a bit of a darker streak,” a CBC reporter intoned in a television report this week. “He’s been known to steal keys, and so on.”

The key-theft and knife-lifting came as little surprise to Kevin J. McGowan, a crow expert at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology — and not because they’re shiny objects. McGowan said crows’ purported interest in shimmering things is “folklore.” But when they’re young, he said, crows are often very interested in objects that they can pick up, manipulate, take apart and use in games with their siblings, he said. That’s even more true for hand-raised crows, which see up close that people possess and frequently use a lot of objects.

“They’re very social, especially when they’re growing up, and they like to interact with other crows. When they’re hand-raised by people, they love to interact with people,” McGowan said.

So Canuck might have seen the knife as the start of a fun game with a police officer and thought: “I’m going to grab that and steal it and maybe he’ll try to catch me,” McGowan said.

Many scientists think crows are among the smartest of animals, and they’ve been shown to be able to recognize individual human faces. McGowan said they’re also keen observers and judges of individuals, seeing them as a “danger or a potential boon,” and perhaps a source of play, even humor. Canuck’s exploits are probably a sign of that, he said.

“They’re not mature until they’re two, and I mean that behaviorally,” McGowan said. “If he’s still a kid, that explains some of this stuff.”

Bergman said he named the crow Canuck, with the approval of the landlord’s son, because he wanted an “ultra-Canadian” moniker “that all Canadians could get behind. I’m proud of my country and always have been.”



Canuck has a red band around his left leg, which Bergman says was placed to make him easily identifiable and to let people know he's had contact with humans. (Shawn Bergman)

He said he sees Canuck almost every day. The bird accompanies him most mornings to Tim Hortons, a Canadian coffee chain, and then follows him home again. When Bergman goes to work, Canuck follows him to the bus stop.

"I'm his best buddy, so no matter who he's with or what he's doing, he'll pretty much drop everything to come see me," Bergman said.

Karin Brulliard is a reporter for the Animalia blog.

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Tuesday, 10 May 2016

A FROG AS BIG AS A GOAT - THE MOST MYSTIFYING LOCH NESS MONSTER SIGHTING EVER?



Might the bizarre-sounding cryptid allegedly encountered by diver Duncan Macdonald while underwater in Loch Ness during the late 19th Century have looked something like this? (© Richard Svensson)

Of all of the many Nessie-related subjects documented by me down through the years (and now collected together in my forthcoming book *Here's Nessie: A Monstrous Compendium From Loch Ness*), few have attracted so many enquiries from readers as the 'frog as big as a goat' supposedly sighted by diver Duncan Macdonald while underwater in Loch Ness (click [here](#) for an earlier mention of this cryptid by me on ShukerNature). The incident was first reported in Scotland's *Northern Chronicle* newspaper (by an unnamed writer) on 31 January 1934, and has been referred to by a number of subsequent publications, but (as far as I am aware) it has never been republished anywhere in full – until now!

Courtesy of the indefatigable research skills of fellow cryptozoological investigator Richard Muirhead, earlier today I was delighted to receive a copy of the original *Northern Chronicle* article, which actually consisted of several different Nessie-themed items linked together. Here is the quite short but very intriguing one concerning Macdonald's alleged encounter:

A DIVER'S EXPERIENCE

Many stories have been circulated by those who go down to the depths inside a diving-bell.

Some of them are, doubtless, true; others, of course, must be taken with the proverbial grain of salt. But the truth of any story can very often be guaranteed by a little careful investigation.

Here is such a story, and, as it concerns Loch Ness, and the experience which befell a well-known diver, it might, by reason of its uniqueness, act as a spur to those whose training has fitted them to probe the mysteries of marine zoology, for, in the opinion of the writer, it is but another aspect of the case of the Loch Ness "monster."

Some forty-five to fifty years ago a small sailing vessel carrying a cargo of guano, when making the passage through Loch Ness, struck a submerged reef known as "Johnnie's Point," and sank, fortunately without loss of life.

The mishap occurred during the night, and when dawn broke it was seen that the tops of the masts were still above water.

Realising that the vessel might be raised, a squad of men was quickly on the scene, and chains were passed underneath the hulk.

But ere the job was completed the action of the water suddenly dislodged the craft, and she vanished into the depths.

Still hoping to salve the wreck, the owner secured the services of Mr Duncan Macdonald, a noted diving expert, who was at the time employed at the Crinan Canal.

Mr Macdonald duly arrived, and it was from the Caledonian Canal Company's diving-barge that he carried out operations.

A STRANGE CREATURE

After having made a descent of thirty feet, Mr Macdonald signalled that he wished to come up, and, on being questioned as to whether there was any sign of the ship, he said there was none.

From this it was obvious that further attempts would be useless, so he was undressed, and the party prepared to make for Fort-Augustus, their headquarters.

Now one man in the party, having heard stories of a strange creature which was said to live in the loch, began to question the diver. The latter, however, was at first rather diffident about taking any part in the conversation.

Yet, since the others knew that anything he might tell them would be perfectly true, they persisted, and finally the diver said that he saw a strange creature that day.

It lay, he said, on a ledge of rock, on the self-same ledge, apparently, on which the keel of the wrecked vessel had rested, about thirty feet down.

There, he continued, lay a queer-looking beast, which he described as something in the nature of a huge frog.

It stared at him, but, as it showed neither ferocity nor fear, he did not disturb it. In his own words he "saw that the beast made no effort to interfere with me, and I did not interfere with it." As to size, the diver said the creature was "as big as a goat, or a good wedder [Scots dialect word for a castrated male sheep]."

The story, exactly as given, was told by Mr Donald Fraser, lock-keeper, Fort Augustus, who often heard the diver (his own grand-uncle) tell it many years ago.

STRANGE CREATURES

Naturally, this incident raises some very important questions, and the first is – Is the frog-like creature related in any way to the "monster" or "monsters" which inhabit Loch Ness?

Or does the diver's story show that such creatures are entirely different from the present "monster"?

If this be so, it is not unreasonable to presume that they might prove to be the form, or perhaps one of the forms[,] of life with which – who can tell? – Loch Ness abounds, and on which the "monster" sustains itself.

In any case[,] past reports of strange creatures having been seen in the loch show conclusively that they and their kind have had their homes there for centuries, and, this being so, it would seem that were they living on fish life, *i.e.*, salmon and trout, to the extent that some people think they do, the whole or at least most of the salmon kind – still fairly plentiful – would long since have been decimated.

Thus, there being no reason at all why the above statements should be doubted, it will surely be granted that the time is ripe for some competent body to conduct an investigation into the under-water life of Loch Ness.

This remarkable report does indeed raise some very important questions, though not necessarily the ones posed in it by its anonymous author.

First and foremost: as Loch Ness is famous for the blackness of its waters due to their high concentration of peat, how could Macdonald have perceived this goat-sized 'frog' – or indeed anything else, for that matter – while diving at a depth of 30 ft? Having said that, the very fact that he went down there at all, in search of the sunken guano vessel, suggests that some degree of underwater vision must be possible at such depths in this loch. Perhaps, however, the viewing conditions were not sufficient for him to obtain a clear picture of the creature's form, so, who knows, maybe it wasn't genuinely frog-like after all, but actually was simply a typical Nessie longneck viewed at an angle at which its neck was not visible to him.

Alternatively, there is even the possibility that in reality it was some very large form of vaguely frog-like fish – an extremely big wels catfish *Siluris glanis*, perhaps, whose wide mouth would certainly call to mind that of a frog if encountered face-on in poor visibility. The wels is not native to Britain, it was introduced to various lakes here from Germany during the 1870s and 1880s, but Loch Ness is not one of the lakes featured in documented introductions. Of course, as so many illegal introductions/releases of non-native species across Britain during the past two centuries readily testify, however, just because no documented introductions of wels specimens into Loch Ness are on record, this doesn't necessarily mean that none has taken place...



Is this what Macdonald *really* saw? (© William M. Rebsamen)

Moving on, it is well worth noting that the *Northern Chronicle's* telling of this incident is very matter-of-fact, in stark contrast to modern-day retellings, which generally claim that Macdonald was terror-stricken, refused to speak about his sighting for days afterwards, etc, etc. Consequently, these would appear to be melodramatic embellishments added subsequently by person(s) unknown.

The notion aired by the above report's author that perhaps this creature was not itself Nessie but was instead some second, entirely different species of monster – and one, moreover, that may actually constitute the prey of the 'real' Nessie – offers a fascinating if implausible prospect to say the least, doubling the quandary of whether *any* type of large cryptid inhabits this vast expanse of freshwater.



LochNessis BIG!! (public domain)

Equally thought-provoking is the author's claim that "...past reports of strange creatures having been seen in the loch show conclusively that they and their kind have had their homes there for centuries". On the contrary, because cryptozoological sceptics in particular habitually discount traditional stories of water-horses and water-bulls existing here, for instance, as nothing more than folk-tales, with no factual basis.

Moreover, in a very extensive *Fortean Studies* paper published in 2001 that surveyed no fewer than 87 cases of mysterious beasts allegedly spied in or on the shores of Loch Ness

prior to 1933 (the year that marked the beginning the modern age of Nessie sightings), German cryptozoological investigator Ulrich Magin dismissed all of them as featuring mere legends, unsubstantiated rumours, or creatures that were unrelated to the long-necked Nessie-type cryptids reported from this loch from 1933 onwards. He concluded that there was no pre-1930s tradition of monsters inhabiting Loch Ness, only the possibility that some marine creature had somehow entered it during the early 1930s and that this is what had given rise to subsequent sightings of monsters there. This prospect is one that had been contemplated by the likes of early LNM chroniclers Lieutenant Commander Rupert T. Gould and Dr Anthonie C. Oudemans too.



An engraving of Dr Anthonie C. Oudemans (public domain)

But what did Magin think about Macdonald's 'giant frog'? In his listing, this was Case #32, but, interestingly, he was apparently unaware of its original *Northern Chronicle* source, because he stated: "This is a story which appears in most books about Nessie but always without reference", and he cited one such book, Peter Costello's *In Search of Lake Monsters* (1974), as the source that he had consulted.

After quoting Costello's brief version of Macdonald's own description of this underwater mystery beast's appearance, Magin concluded "...the description is unlikely to refer to a long-necked animal or any other animal known in the loch". Or indeed elsewhere, in fact, as I am certainly not aware of any living species of frog-like creature the size of a goat that is currently known to science in the living state (there are of course various extremely large amphibians known from the fossil record).

At present, therefore, the goat-sized 'frog' of Loch Ness remains a major enigma in the Nessie chronicles. Nevertheless, now that its original published source has been resurrected and reproduced here, one of the most mystifying and paradoxical LNM-associated reports – ostensibly unlikely, yet supplied by a very experienced and seemingly highly-reliable eyewitness - is finally readily available for scrutiny and further investigation by future Nessie researchers.

This ShukerNature blog article is excerpted exclusively from my forthcoming book ***Here's Nessie: A Monstrous Compendium From Loch Ness***.

You never know *what* you may encounter when diving underwater in LochNess! (© William M. Rebsamen)

Posted by Dr Karl Shuker at 21:39

Reactions:

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📌 2 comments:

1. Glasgow Boy10 May 2016 at 22:50

Just to add msytery to this, in 2013, I published a similar sounding story from 1933

<http://lochnessmystery.blogspot.co.uk/2013/12/a-rediscovered-divers-tale.html>

• Dr Karl Shuker11 May 2016 at 03:12

Thanks very much for posting this, I wasn't aware of this sighting before. Do you know of any further underwater sightings at Loch Ness?

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Cave of bones makes a macabre playground for Myanmar villagers

2016-06-06 09:42:28 UTC

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By Joshua Carroll



CHIN, Myanmar — At the cragged peak overlooking Parte village in Myanmar's mountainous Chin state, mounds of human bones spill from the mouth of a small cave.

Pieces of spinal column are scattered on the dirt among sun-bleached hip joints, femurs, ribs and jawbones, which have a few yellowing teeth still sitting in their sockets.

Shares What's This? Image: charlotte england/mashable

teeth still sitting in their sockets.



Image: CHARLOTTE ENGLAND/MASHABLE

Every body part is represented in large numbers among the clutter, but there are surprisingly few skulls. It is as if most of the dead had their heads lopped off before being left here. But in fact the real explanation far more bizarre.

"We used to roll the skulls down the hill to see who could get theirs furthest," said one elderly man with a chuckle as he leant on his staff-like walking stick and gestured up at the cave from the doorstep of his hillside house.

Lian Sang, the head honcho at the village. The Chin State is remote and one of the least populated parts of the country. Some of the villagers in Parte.

People have been using the cave and its skeletons as a macabre playground for decades. The remains belong to their pre-Christian ancestors, who practiced animist beliefs until the village converted at the end of WWII.

Image: CHARLOTTE ENGLAND/MASHABLE

No one knows exactly who the bones belong to

It's unclear why the forefathers of Parte left their dead at the peak of the hill. A possible



Lian Sang, the head honcho at the village. The Chin State is remote and one of the least populated parts of the country. Some of the villagers in Parte.



Lian Sang, the head honcho at the village. The Chin State is remote and one of the least populated parts of the country. Some of the villagers in Parte.



Lian Sang, the head honcho at the village. The Chin State is remote and one of the least populated parts of the country. Some of the villagers in Parte.

explanation is that the state's pre-Christian religions involved the worship of natural landmarks like large trees and rocks.

The fragments of skull dotted along the path up to the cave are testament to the popularity of the skull rolling game. But other pastimes include banging a pair of arm or leg bones against a rock like drumsticks.

"Some of the kids try and scare each other with the skulls, or they'll get the legs and make music," said Lian Sang, the village's chieftain. "Sometimes they try and break the bones with their hands."

Image: CHARLOTTE ENGLAND/MASHABLE

Anywhere between 200 and 400 bodies were left in this and three other caves nearby.

In the pre-war days, funeral rites involved getting way too drunk and carrying the body on a stretcher up the hill. Mourners would sing and dance as they climbed before laying the deceased to rest.

In comparison, the more recently deceased are entombed in the village's Christian cemetery, where their remains are treated with more of the sanctity you'd expect in a graveyard.

Image: CHARLOTTE ENGLAND/MASHABLE

According to Lian Sang, the people of Parte are not irked with treating the cave's bones so casually because no one knows exactly who they belong to, and therefore don't feel a familial connection to them. "There are no written records, because our ancestors were illiterate," he explained.

It may seem disrespectful to chuck skulls down a hill or bang leg bones against rocks, but Western societies have their own ways of interfering with remains, points out Dr.



Lian Sang, the head honcho at the village. The Chin State is remote and one of the least populated parts of the country. Some of the villagers in Parte.

Duncan Sayer, an associate at the Centre for Death and Society at the U.K.'s University of Bath.

"We build on the cemeteries of our dead quite a lot don't we?" he said. "We build railway lines on the top of them, we excavate them and study them and that's just our way of revisiting those people and those remains ... so it's sort of similar except that perhaps there's less fun attached to it."

He added: "It's difficult for us to judge what other societies do with their own dead ... they are their ancestors so really it's their choice."

Image: CHARLOTTE ENGLAND/MASHABLE



Lian Sang, the head honcho at the village. The Chin State is remote and one of the least populated parts of the country. Some of the villagers in Parte.

As we trudged up the steep path to the cave, I thought about the ethical implications of reporting on human remains. We should be sure not to disturb anything while taking pictures, I decided; we should leave no trace.

Then I heard a shout. Standing on a ridge above me was Tun Lian, one of our Chin guides, proudly thrusting a skull into air. Later he and his colleague, Amen, held the jawbones up to their faces before rearranging them into neat rows on a rock.

It was hard to discern anything sinister in all this. If anything, there is something refreshing about people responding to death with play, rather than fear or revulsion.

Image: Charlotte england/mashable



Have something to add to this story? Share it in the comments.

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Lian Sang, the head honcho at the village. The Chin State is remote and one of the least populated parts of the country. Some of the villagers in Parte.



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A Rediscovered Diver's Tale

[blogspot.com](http://lochnessmystery.blogspot.com)
<http://lochnessmystery.blogspot.com/2013/12/a-rediscovered-divers-tale.html>

LOCH NESS MONSTER

Reclaiming the Loch Ness Monster from the current tide of debunking and scepticism. If you believe there is something strange in Loch Ness, read on.

Sunday, 8 December 2013

Sightings of the Loch Ness Monster are rare, seeing it on land is rarer still, but the rarest of all sightings belong to those people who dive into the depths of the loch to unexpectedly encounter its most notorious resident. I could probably count all these stories on the fingers of one hand stretching back over 130 years.

So, I was delighted to stumble upon this new (yet old) story of a diver who had an unsettling time of it in Loch Ness in the 1880s. I was perusing some old newspaper clippings in the National Library of Scotland when I came across this letter from a reader in the 9th December 1933 issue of the *Dundee Courier and Advertiser*.



The text of the story is given below:

LOCH NESS MONSTER

Sir, As much has appeared in the press recently regarding the Loch Ness monster, perhaps it may be of interest to the readers of the "Courier and Advertiser" to hear a little more from one who for some years dwelt in the district of Dores, on the beautiful classic shores of Loch Ness.

Once coming to "Meffin" I made the interesting discovery that one of the residents of this village also hailed from this part of Inverness-shire. After discussing persons and places the conversation turned round to the Loch Ness monster.

"I remember," he began, "how the villagers in that district used to talk about a monster being seen on Loch Ness, about three(?) miles from Invermoriston – that is, at Ruskich(?). The story runs that a gentleman sailing down the loch in his yacht was driven shorewards. The yacht sank and came to rest on a ledge of rock.

In order to secure some of his valuables the owner of the sunken yacht hired the Caledonian Canal diver – Honeyman by name – from the village of Clachnaharry. He intimated to the assembled onlookers that he would begin work the following morning. When the coast was clear, however, the diver, thinking that he and his ??? would get something for themselves, donned his diving suit and descended into the water to make inspection.

When he got to the yacht it slipped off the ledge of the rock and disappeared into the depths. But then, to the diver's intense horror, a huge beast, measuring about nine feet long and possessing a body as stout as that of an average man, passed in front of him.

Perhaps the diver thought that it was the ??? of the lower regions that had come to advise him on his dishonest work, or that Loch Ness possessed the door to the nether regions. Whatever it may have been, the diver, who in very truth had 'got the wind up,' adamantly refused to descend into the water again.

"I understand," added my friend, "that there is still living in Clachnaharry a man that can remember the details of this incident, which happened nearly 50 years ago. It was no unusual thing for parents of the Loch Ness district to frighten recalcitrant children by threatening to bring the Loch Ness water horse to them." – I am, etc,

A Lover of the Highlands.

Methven.

Some of the words are hard to pick out due to the letter being printed at the spine of the newspaper. The words I am not sure of are marked with a (?) while illegible ones are marked "???". However, I am sure you get the gist of the story. My guess is that this sinking occurred three miles north of Invermoriston near Alltsigh which marked the beginning of the long Ruskich Wood. Since the incident is alleged to have happened fifty years before around 1883, a contemporary half-inch to the mile survey map below marks the general area (courtesy of the National Library of Scotland).



The story itself concerns a sunk yacht and a diver called Honeyman from Clachnaharry. Addressing the boat first, I have found no record of such a sinking in the newspapers of the time which some may presume to cast doubt upon the story.

In fact, stories of sinkings at Loch Ness are pretty rare. The best known one was the schooner "*Margaret Wilson*" which struck the rocks near Point Clair back in 1861. It was carrying a large cargo of guano at the time (and wonders whether such a load attracted or repelled Nessie!).

VESSEL SUNK IN LOCH-NESS.—On Friday last while the schooner "*Margaret Wilson*" was beating up Loch-
Ness, she struck upon the termination of a reef of rock running from Point Clair to about 150 yards on the west of the bay of Glenmorriston, sprung a leak and shortly afterwards sank in deep water. She had a cargo of guano said to be worth £1400, in bags, with which she was proceeding from Leith to Londonderry. The vessel belonged to James Mackenzie, Plockton, Ross-shire, and was commanded by his son. She is twenty years old, and valued at £600, but only insured for half that sum. The captain stated in his deposition that the vessel would not have been lost if the sunken rock had been marked by a floating buoy. We understand there is no hope of her being raised, or her cargo being saved.

But I would suggest sinkings could as easily not be reported. The best example I can think of was the sinking of the Zulu class boat, the "*Pansy*", off Foyers at some

time after 1911. There is no record of this 80 foot vessel sinking in Loch Ness and it was not discovered until 2002 during the Loch Ness Project's *Operation Groundtruth*. More details can be found [here](#).

However, more success was gained in the matter of our diver Honeyman. An examination of the 1881 census revealed a small number of males by that name residing in the Inverness county. The most likely candidate was James Honeyman who resided at No.2 Low Street in the Clachnaharry area. He was aged 31 years in 1881 which best places him as our man since the other Honeymans were aged 0, 11, 14, 61 and 66.

However, his trade is stated as "*carpenter*" in the 1881 census and "*house joiner*" in the 1891 census. One may have expected the job of "*diver*" to be stated but on reflection I would not think so. My reason for saying so is because I do not think such a skill would be a full time job. For example, a search revealed that a Donnie Goodwin was a lock keeper on the Caledonian Canal as well as a diver. One suspects he spent more time being a lock keeper than a diver! In the same light, I suspect other divers required other jobs to gain income. Below is an 1874 picture of a diver courtesy of the Highland Heritage website Ambaile. It cannot be verified if this is James Honeyman himself.

James Honeyman's street is still there today (though doubtless it would be unrecognisable to him). It's location near the mouth of the Caledonian Canal may suggest that he was well placed for a maritime-related job.



Now at this point some may ask about the well known Duncan MacDonald story from 1880. To remind readers, here is the story quoted from "*The Loch Ness Story*" by Nicholas Witchell.

An experience by another MacDonald in 1880 was of an altogether different nature and terrifying in the

extreme. As a diver, Duncan MacDonald was sent down to investigate a ship that had sunk in the Caledonian Canal entrance at Fort Augustus. Not long after, he sent urgent signals on his line to be immediately brought back to the surface.

Shaking and ashen faced, he refused to say what he had seen for several days. When he had sufficiently composed himself, he told the tale of how he had seen a "very odd looking beastie ... like a huge frog" lying on the rock ledge where the wreck was lodged as he examined its hull.

He refused to ever dive in the loch again though it would appear this encounter was where Loch Ness ends and the canal begins.

My first thought was whether these two stories could be the same or related in some way. But I do not think so as there is more that divides than unites them. They occurred about the same time but the names and locations are different.

So a man descends into Loch Ness seeking riches but returns with terror. What exactly did he see that day? Something nine feet long and one to two feet wide swam past him but there is not much more to add. That is certainly bigger than anything known in Loch Ness but not quite full Nessie proportions. One wonders if the diver had managed to see the whole creature from the limited field of view of his helmet?

Getting rough dimensions of a similar helmet, suggests the diameter of the helmet is about 24cm and the "porthole" is just over 9cm. The boat was most likely on a ledge about 10m under where I guess the horizontal visibility would be less than 6m. Drawing some field of view triangles based on these numbers gives a field of view of about 4.5m at a distance of 6m. Likewise, a 3m creature would full occupy the horizontal field of view at a distance of 4m. So, the creature would have to be less than 12 feet away to not be fully visible through the helmet visor.

Of course, it could be our oft mentioned but never seen Atlantic Sturgeon which would have these proportions. Would Honeyman have recognised a sturgeon? One presumes so, but who knows in those conditions? I will just remind readers here that no sturgeon has ever been seen or caught in Loch Ness.

So, an interesting story and one wonders if James Honeyman's descendants still tell this tale of their great-great-grandfather? If so, perhaps you could contact me at this blog!

The author can be contacted at lochnesskelpie@gmail.com

Posted by Glasgow Boy at 16:17

22 comments:

1. bfjord8 December 2013 at 20:00

GB-

The Dundee Courier and Advertiser article you unearthed was fascinating and indeed seems similar to the Duncan McDonald account. Both remind me of sequences in *The Secret of The Loch* (1934) in which a horribly miscast iguana-as-loch-monster menaces the life of intrepid helmeted divers. I wonder if the accounts were known to the script writers? Have you any sense of the popularity of that film on the general public at that time? If the film was released in 34, might it have cribbed the story from the Advertiser of 33? I also wonder if the film might have had any influence on the tale later reported to Witchell? Your blog remains one of my favorite stops on the web. Thanks for the consistently thoughtful research and insights.

♦ Anonymous9 December 2013 at 11:43

as ardent of a follower of Nessie as I am, I still find *The Secret of The Loch* to be a hard one to watch without hitting the fast-forward button. that being said, the "beastie" makes an appearance at roughly the 1:07 mark, via youtube.

♦ Glasgow Boy9 December 2013 at 15:15

The press of the time certainly followed the film's production but I doubt it was an Oscar contender!

♦ Anonymous9 December 2013 at 16:34

perhaps a posthumous Oscar for Seymour Hicks is in order!

2. bodge from suffolk9 December 2013 at 13:08

While on the theme of divers at loch ness, when the Wellington bomber was discovered in the loch were divers sent down to assess it or not? if so did they have any unusual encounters?? as this would be a more recent event & they may still be contactable. just a thought.

♦ Anonymous9 December 2013 at 19:24

speaking of things that have sank, what about the Sherlock Holmes movie prop?

♦ John Alvarado10 December 2013 at 13:08

There's an article on the bomber at the Loch Ness Project Web site and according to the article, yes, divers were sent down to confirm and investigate. It makes no mention of anomalous sightings though. In fact the bomber was later recovered and restored. Maybe a Google search will turn up more. Here's the link:

http://www.lochnessproject.org/explore_loch_ness/groundtruth/loch_ness_wellington_bomber.htm

♦ John Alvarado10 December 2013 at 14:03

There's an article on the prop on this very blog site here:

<http://lochnessmystery.blogspot.com/2012/02/interesting-photograph.htm>

I've never read an account of the prop ever having been located, photographed or recovered. Presumably it's still where it sank. An amusing side note: When the Rines "Gargoyle Head" made the rounds, it was suggested by some critics that what it showed was the movie props head!

♦ Glasgow Boy10 December 2013 at 14:45

I presume the model was wireframe covered in some kind of canvas material. So I would guess the fabric has all but gone and the frame has sunk to the bottom only to be compressed by the water pressure. Perhaps.

By now it would be almost covered with silt.

• Anonymous 11 December 2013 at 06:22

not to beat a dead horse, but in Frank Searle's book "Loch Ness Investigation- what really happened" he discusses the movie prop as well as the Rines photograph. look in chapter 2, page 18.

3. Anonymous 10 December 2013 at 13:54

If memory serves me correctly I believe they found the wreck of the Crusader, the record setting speed boat of the late John Cobb who died on the loch trying to set a world water speed record.

• John Alvarado 10 December 2013 at 14:58

Yes they did, the story is here:

http://www.lochnessproject.org/explore_loch_ness/groundtruth/loch_ness_Cobb_Crusader.htm

4. Paul Daniels 11 December 2013 at 02:48

I am surprised that so little is made of the 1970 Brock Badger experience as recounted by Dinsdale, is Mr Badger still alive, can he be contacted?

• Glasgow Boy 11 December 2013 at 03:05

Yes, I was in email contact with him to clarify any points in the article I wrote.

5. Anonymous 11 December 2013 at 08:38

Re the £1400 of guano: I suppose that it at least gives you confidence that the loch's largest putative inhabitants might be able to survive the environmental "drop-outs" from the fish farm.

Which reminds me that the waters of the loch are said to be laxative for humans and horses (of the terrestrial variety).

And if you had a population of large amphibians in the loch doing whatever they do then what effect would that have on the quality of the water?

AnonStg

• John Alvarado 11 December 2013 at 15:04

Laxative? I don't get you, are people drinking the water?

• Steve Plambeck 12 December 2013 at 00:09

There was at one time an inexpensive Scotch named Inverness (and may still be for all I know). I never tried it, and this discussion is making me glad I didn't :-)

• Steve Plambeck 12 December 2013 at 00:40

Eh, what I meant to type before stopping to joke about Nessie laced Scotch was...

Certain amphibians, the viviparous aquatic caecilians, birth their young at somewhere around 1/3 of adult length. Scale that up, and a 9 foot juvenile would have a mother about 27 feet long. "To the diver's intense horror, a huge beast, measuring about nine feet long..." That's probably just coincidence of course, although a tasty one.

Now viviparous reproduction among modern salamanders isn't nearly as common as among their cousin caecilians, but it does occur. And just now reading the abstract to a paper on the evolution of viviparous reproduction in salamanders by Marvalee H. Wake (<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/jez.1402660507/abstract>) I was struck by the statement: "it has been suggested that COLD might be a "selection pressure" for the evolution of egg retention." (Emphasis on the word COLD is mine.) It seems the salamanders that tend towards live birth are found in cold, high lands. My, my.

6. Anonymous12 December 2013 at 13:54

Just to mention that there's a book called "Off Scotland" which lists wrecks, including those in inland waters.

On p.157 is an entry for the "Irene" "SS (wood)" of Wick wrecked at Loch Ness, 9/1896 at location 5720.00 0425.00. Immediately below is an entry for an unknown vessel "stranded in Loch Ness", 24/1/1868 at the same location.

AnonStg

7. Travis, 2012 Consciousness Shift Resources14 December 2013 at 15:53

Apparently, the, so called "Loch Ness Monster" is a species which survived the last catechism while residing within earths many underwater cavern systems;
<http://www.focusonrecovery.net/mattersoffaith/Bigfoot.html>

8. Anonymous16 December 2013 at 08:31

Travis, I believe you meant to write cataclysm instead of catechism right? Then again, maybe at some point in the past the abby monks got to Nessie and she's a papist!

Paddy

9. richard16 December 2013 at 15:02

As a youngster, I used to gig eels in the Delaware River. Many times the eels could be found coiled up in a loop under a rock with their head protruding above their coils. They appeared remarkably similar to a frog in that position. I believe an eel the size of Nessie fits the diver's description very nicely. Thanks for your excellent blog, GB.

richard

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Ahoy! The Vikings are back in North America

27 May

thelocal.se



Ahoy! The Vikings are back in North America

The Local · 2 Jun 2016,
11:42

Published: 02 Jun 2016
11:42 GMT+02:00

The world's largest Viking ship in modern times has reached Canada after a challenging journey across the Atlantic, departing Scandinavian shores in late April.

Björn Ahlander, the ship's Swedish captain, ordered the great dragon vessel – named after Harald Hårfagre, the king who unified Norway in the 10th century – to drop anchor at St Anthony in Newfoundland, Canada, on Wednesday, after more than a month at sea.

"I am proud of the men and what we have achieved en route. It has not been easy. We have encountered many problems on the trip, but the crew has remained in good spirits and has worked hard all the way," he told reporters.

Following in the historical tailwind of Leif Eriksson, the Viking thought to have discovered America centuries before Christopher Columbus, the ship left Norway's Avaldsnes on April 26th, taking a route via the Faroe Islands, Shetland Islands, Iceland and Greenland.

The journey offered stark contrasts, with the crew battling winds, ice and rain – but also calm waters, sunshine and even the wedding of two of its crew members on Greenland.

Wedding at Hvalsey, Greenland.: <https://t.co/2kgQZtLgx0> via @YouTube

— DrakenHaraldHårfagre (@drakenhh) June 1, 2016

Harald Hårfagre is equipped with modern navigational tools, but also historical aids such as log lines and magnetic and solar compasses. It was accompanied by another boat during the Atlantic crossing, on standby to rescue the 33-strong crew

on board if things had gone awry.

An impressive 35 metres long, eight metres wide and with a mast height of 24 metres, Harald Hårfagre is the world's biggest longship built in modern times. Sponsored by Norwegian businessman Sigurd Aase, it was completed in 2012.

The ship is set to remain at St Anthony for a couple of days and will then sail onwards to Quebec, Toronto and several places in the United States.

The Local (news@thelocal.se)

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116 25 Stockholm
Sweden

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Teen to historic prison: Al Capone's radio is wrong vintage

May 31, 2016

yahoo.com

<https://www.yahoo.com/news/teen-historic-prison-al-capones-radio-wrong-vintage-183753735.html?nhp=1>

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — A sharp-eyed boy who collects antique radios is taking umbrage with the vintage radio on display inside gangster Al Capone's cell at a historic Philadelphia prison.

Eastern State Penitentiary closed in 1971 and now operates as a museum and national historic landmark. Thirteen-year-old Joey Warchal took a tour and noticed the radio in Capone's cell was wrong.

The Prohibition-era mobster spent time at Eastern State in 1929 and 1930. The radio was made in 1942.

The seventh-grader offered to find the prison a historically accurate radio. The prison gladly accepted his help.

The Philadelphia Daily News (<http://bit.ly/1TOX73N>) reports the teen has located a 1929 model and will deliver it to Eastern State next week.

Joey began collecting at age 8. His mom says while most kids want toys "he wants antiques."

Information from: The Philadelphia Daily News, <http://www.philly.com>

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Media made us look 'like a bunch of kooks' in son's meningitis death trial, dad says

2016/06/06

cbc.ca

Alberta dad confused by guilty verdict in son's meningitis death, but has no plans to appeal

'We're a lot more normal than the media has portrayed us to be,' says David Stephan

Dave Dormer · CBC News June 6, 2016



David and Collet Stephan appear outside the courthouse in Lethbridge, Alta., on April 26. (David Rossiter/Canadian Press)

Waiting to be sentenced for failing to provide the necessities of life in the death of his nearly 19-month-old son, David Stephan says he still doesn't understand exactly what a jury found him guilty of doing.

The guilty verdict for Stephan and his wife, Collet Stephan — was handed down in April in a Lethbridge, Alta., courtroom. Sentencing is expected on June 23.

"It's a quite confusing question at this point and one of the things the judge is going to have to consider during sentencing as to what the jury found us guilty on, because it's so wide open and varying," Stephan told CBC's *Calgary Eyeopener*.

But the Stephans are not planning on launching an appeal.

"At this point we have no real plans moving forward," said David.

"The appeal process itself is extremely financially taxing, you have to purchase all the transcripts from the previous trial, and seeing how it was a very long trial, that in itself would be probably \$30,000 to \$50,000, and that's excluding lawyers' fees and whatnot, just to come out of the gates on it."

'Completely at the mercy of the courts'

Their son Ezekiel died in 2012 of bacterial meningitis.

"We have obviously a lot of thoughts going through our mind as we're completely at the mercy of the courts now, and the fate of our family and the fate of where Collet and I will be and our children will be is completely up in the air at this point," said Stephan.



The court was told the couple thought their toddler was suffering from croup or the flu and spent more than two weeks treating him with remedies like hot peppers, garlic, onions and horseradish, even though a family friend who was a nurse told them she thought Ezekiel had meningitis.

David and Collet Stephan were found guilty of failing to provide the necessities of life to their son Ezekiel following his death from meningitis. (Facebook/CBC)

They eventually took the toddler from their rural home in southern Alberta to a

naturopathic clinic in Lethbridge to pick up an echinacea mixture. At the time, Ezekiel was too stiff to ride in a car seat and had to lie on a mattress in the vehicle.

"It could have been as small as a few minutes' delay in rushing him to the ambulance to maybe they believe the evidence that he had bacterial meningitis and not viral meningitis ... and that they may have found us guilty for actually causing his death," said Stephan.

"It's not likely based on the information and evidence that came forward in the court, but that's how wide and varying it can be and each jury member could have found us guilty on a different element — so that's where it's tough as well, depending on what the individual jury member's opinion was."

Maximum sentence is 5 years

The couple have already begun preparing for the worst.

The maximum sentence for failing to provide the necessities of life is five years in prison.

After Ezekiel died, the Stephans moved from Glenwood, Alta., to Nelson, B.C., and returned there after the verdict with their three other boys: Ezra, 8, Ephraim, 3, and Enoch, 1.

"We've been spending the last two weeks packing up our home and making sure if things go really sour that it doesn't leave our family in a bind where they have to come and try to pack up our stuff a considerable distance from where they are," he said.

Claims conviction sets precedent

Stephan posted a letter on social media to the jury following its verdict, saying it sets a dangerous precedent.

"The floodgates have now been opened, and if we do not fall in line with parenting as seen fit by the government we all stand at risk of criminal prosecution," he wrote.

He continues to stand behind those words.

"I largely do," he said. "I have a great concern, not just for Collet and I and our three children, but yes — a precedent is set.

"Unfortunately, much of the information that parents have been exposed to has been highly sensationalized.... We're a lot more normal than the media has portrayed us to be, so this realistically could be a lot of different parents."

Death threats received

Reaction to the guilty verdicts has been sharply mixed.

"We've received tremendous amounts of support from all across the world, a lot of love," said David.

"We've also received multiple death threats, dozens of death threats from individuals who have only been subjected to certain media articles that made us out to look like a bunch of kooks that tried to treat our child's meningitis with fruit and juice and maple syrup and whatnot, so there's been really two extremes, just an outpouring of love and support and an outpouring of hatred and death threats."

With files from the Calgary Eyeopener

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Ukraine border guards discover bootleg alcohol pipeline

June 7, 2016

yahoo.com

<https://www.yahoo.com/news/ukraine-border-guards-discover-bootleg-alcohol-pipeline-115232399.html?nhp=1>

MOSCOW (AP) — Authorities in Ukraine say they have foiled plans to ship bootleg alcohol from Moldova to Ukraine via a pipeline.

The SBU security service said on Tuesday that border guards in the country's west stopped works to lay pipes on the bed of the Dniester river at a point where it crosses the border.

The would-be bootleggers rented a house on the riverbank on the Ukrainian side and started to lay the pipe across the river, authorities said. The SBU released footage of the pipeline being dug up.

Smuggling has flourished between Ukraine and its western neighbors for years, and Moldova has been a major source of bootleg alcohol for other former Soviet republics.

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Happy International Ungulate Day!

Monday, June 6, 2016 by Lincoln Park Zoo in New Arrivals

lpzoo.org

<http://www.lpzoo.org/blog/happy-international-ungulate-day>



How better to celebrate International Ungulate Day than with a look at Lincoln Park Zoo's new Bactrian camel calf, born May 9? The little one has been named Alexander Camelton by his caregivers...a nod to the Founding

Father and the hit musical!

Support Alexander Camelton with a Special ADOPT

2001 North Clark Street •
Chicago, IL 60614 Get
Map/Directions Call 312-
742-2000



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ALMANAQUE LA TRACA 1933



60 ct

Elizabeth I dress: Altar cloth may be Queen's gown - BBC News

bbc.com



- 16 May 2016
- From the section Hereford & Worcester

Media captionThe ownership of the ornate silver cloth is to be decided

Remnants of a dress belonging to Queen Elizabeth I may have been found in an altar cloth in Herefordshire.

The fabric at St Faith's Church in Bacton has been identified by experts as a piece of a 16th Century dress.

An examination by Historic Royal Palaces curators has strengthened a theory it formed part of a court dress.

The Queen is depicted in the Rainbow Portrait wearing a similar fabric, but no documentary evidence has been found to suggest the dress was worn by her.

Historians believe the monarch could have gifted the garment to one of her servants, Blanche Parry.

Dating back to the last decades of the 16th Century, the altar cloth that hung in a glass case at St Faith's Church has long been associated with Parry, who was born in Bacton.

It is made from cloth of silver; a high status fabric which Tudor sumptuary law dictated could only be worn by royalty or the highest echelons of the aristocracy.

Historic Royal Palaces joint chief curator Tracy Borman said: "This is an incredible find. Items of Tudor dress are exceptionally rare in any case, but to uncover one with such a close personal link to Queen Elizabeth I is almost unheard of.

"We're thrilled to be working with St Faith's Church to conserve this remarkable object, which will now be further examined by our conservation experts at Hampton Court Palace where we hope to be able to display it in future."

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Image copyright CARL DE SOUZA/AFP/Getty Images

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Amelia Elizabeth DYER



A.K.A.: "The Reading Baby Farmer"

Classification: Serial killer

Characteristics: The most prolific baby farm murderer of Victorian England

Number of victims: 6 - 100 +

Date of murder: 1880 - 1896

Date of arrest: April 4, 1896

Date of birth: 1839

Victim profile: Children ("adopted" illegitimate infants for lump-sum payments)

Method of murder: Strangulation

Location: Reading, Berkshire, England, United Kingdom

Status: Executed by hanging at Newgate Prison on June 10, 1896

Amelia Dyer was a 'baby farmer'. Someone who, for a fee, would look after children, usually illegitimate, until a home could be found for them. Born in 1829 and raised in Bristol to respectable parents and trained as a nurse before deciding that 'adopting' illegitimate infants was a more lucrative career.

In 1879 she was sentenced to six months' hard labour after being found guilty on a charge of neglect. A doctor had become suspicious of the number of infants who had died while in Mrs Dyer's care and had reported the matter to the authorities. On her release she spent several periods in mental institutions before resuming her child-care activities.

In 1895 she moved to Kensington Road, Reading and began advertising. It was not long before small bodies were being fished out of the Thames. One of the bodies recovered had a tape around its neck and was wrapped in a parcel. The paper enclosing the corpse had an address on it and this was traced to Mrs Dyer. The tiny corpse was identified as Helena Fry.

Dyer was eventually arrested on 4th April 1896. By May, seven tiny bodies had been recovered from the Thames, all had the tape around their necks and all were parcelled. Three of the bodies were identified

She described her situation. "We are plain, homely people, in fairly good circumstances. I don't want a child for money's sake, but for company and home comfort.

"Myself and my husband are dearly fond of children. I have no child of my own. A child with me will have a good home and a mother's love."

Mrs Harding sounded every bit the respectable, caring woman that Evelina hoped to find for Doris and she wrote at once begging her not to consider anyone else until they had met.

The reply came back: "Rest assured I will do my duty by that dear child. I will be a mother, as far as lies in my power.

"It is just lovely here, healthy and pleasant. There is an orchard opposite our front door." Evelina could visit whenever she wished.

The only issue between them was that Evelina really wanted to pay a weekly fee for her daughter to be looked after whereas Mrs Harding preferred - indeed, insisted on - a full adoption and a one-off payment in advance of £10, for which "I will take her entirely, and she shall be of no further expense to you".

Reluctantly, the desperate mother agreed, and a week later Mrs Harding, clutching "a good warm shawl to wrap round baby in the train for it is bitter cold", arrived in Cheltenham.

Evelina was surprised to discover that the woman she had been corresponding with was more elderly than she had expected and thick-set beneath her long cape. But she seemed affectionate as she swaddled little Doris in the shawl.

Evelina handed over a cardboard box of clothes she had packed - nappies, chemises, petticoats, frocks, nightgowns and a powder box - and the £10, and received in return a signed receipt.

She accompanied Mrs Harding to Cheltenham station and then on to Gloucester, where she stood weeping amid the choking steam on the platform as the 5.20pm train took her little girl away. She returned to her lodgings a broken woman.

A few days later, she had a letter from Mrs Harding saying all was well. Evelina wrote back straight away. She never received a reply.

Evelina and little Doris Marmon had fallen victim to one of the murkiest of all the many social evils in Britain just over a century ago - the "baby farmers".

Infant mortality was high and children's lives were cheap. Many families in straitened circumstances were happy to dispose of an infant to a new home and not ask too many questions about where and to whom it was going.

Some, like Evelina, had every intention of retrieving their youngsters.

Others were just glad to see the back of them - one less mouth to feed, one less burden in the struggle to survive.

They were prey to the unscrupulous, the immoral and the murderous, and none was quite as chillingly evil as the "caring woman" to whom Doris had just been entrusted.

"Mrs Harding" was one of the many aliases of Amelia Dyer, a hardfaced brute of a woman, whose crimes are recalled in a new book.

In our child-centred society today, it is hard to comprehend a time when there were dead babies by the thousands, droves of missing Madeleines, scores of Myra Hindleys, and hardly anyone batted an eyelid.

It was in such an environment that Amelia Dyer plied her gruesome trade for more than a quarter of a century.

She was "the angel-maker", as she once explained to her own little daughter, Polly, curious about the babies that kept appearing in the household and then disappearing.

She was sending little children to Jesus, she said, because He wanted them far more than their mothers did.

At 9pm, the train from Gloucester pulled into Paddington station in London - not Reading, as she had told Doris's mother - and Dyer struggled off, carrying a carpet bag, the box of baby clothes and the baby herself, whimpering in the shawl. She took a bus to Willesden, and got off at Mayo Road.

At the door of No 76, she was greeted by her daughter Polly, now aged 23, a grown-up, married woman.

Once inside their rented rooms, Dyer lifted the lid of a work basket and rifled through the tangle of threads and thimbles for some white edging tape, enough to wrap twice around the soft folds of Doris's neck.

Next the tape was pulled tight, held for a second, and then tied in a knot. Doris would have struggled until her limbs went limp, her mouth opening and closing in a last, silent bid for life.

Then she joined the scores - no one ever knew exactly how many - Dyer had already sent to their maker.

The two women bound the body in a napkin, then picked over the clothes in the cardboard box, keeping the good items, earmarking the rest for the pawnbroker. From Evelina's £10, Dyer paid the rent she owed to her unwitting landlady, and even gave her a pair of child's boots as a present for her little girl.

The very next day - Wednesday April 1, 1896 - another infant, 13-month-old Harry Simmons, was brought to Mayo Road in return for a £10 payment.

This time there was no spare tape to be found in the work basket, so the knot was unpicked around Doris's neck and the same white length used to strangle him.

The following evening, the two corpses were stuffed, one on top of the other, into Dyer's carpet bag and weighted down with bricks.

Then she took the bus to Paddington and the train to Reading.

There she lugged her heavy load through the streets down to the river and a lonely spot she knew well, by a footbridge over a weir at Caversham Lock.

In the darkness she pushed the bag through the railings until it fell and she heard it smack into the waters beneath.

As she turned to leave, a man hurried passed on his way home and called out "Goodnight".

Later, his evidence at the Old Bailey would help send 58-year-old Dyer to the gallows.

Unlike many of her generation, Amelia Dyer was not the product of grinding poverty.

She was born in a small village near Bristol in 1838, daughter of a master shoemaker, and learned to read and write and had a love of literature and poetry.

She trained as a nurse, a gruelling job but a skilled and respectable one.

From a midwife, she learned of a less arduous way of earning a living - providing lodgings in her own home for young women who, in an unforgiving age, were pregnant outside of wedlock.

From the moment their bump began to show they were shunned by polite society or sacked if they were in work.

So for a fee, unscrupulous businesses offered to take in these young women and see them through to the birth. After the mothers left, their unwanted babies would be looked after as "nurse children".

The money differed. If the girl was from a well-off background with parents anxious to keep her plight secret, it might be as much as £80.

Or, say, £50 if the father of the child was prepared to contribute in order to hush up his involvement.

But more often these were impoverished girls, whose "immorality" meant even the workhouse wouldn't take them, and for them the deal might be done for a fiver.

To cut costs, the farmed-out babies were starved, and to reduce the aggravation of looking after them they were sedated with easily-available alcohol and opiates.

Godfrey's Cordial, a syrup laced with laudanum and known colloquially as "The Quietness", was a favourite to put a child fast asleep. And if the child died, so be it. Most did, sooner or later.

One such establishment was described with horror by a police officer who uncovered it in Brixton, London.

In one room, five three and four-week-old infants were lying in filth, three under a shawl on a sofa and two stuffed into a small crib.

They were ashen-faced and emaciated like miniature crones, their bones visible through transparent skin.

They lay open-mouthed, in a state of torpor, eyes glazed, scarcely human. What chilled the policeman was the silence: "Instead of the noises to be expected from children of tender age, they were lying without a moan from their wretched lips, and apparently dying."

Five infants were in another room, in slightly better condition because a weekly fee was still being exacted for them instead of the single "premium" that had been paid for the ones encouraged to die quickly.

However immoral this business - and the immorality usually stretched to those who deposited children there, in full realisation of their fate - it was one much in demand, and lucrative. There was a pile of cash to be made here, as Amelia Dyer realised.

Her own particular refinement was not to bother with letting the children die through neglect and starvation, but to murder them straight away and pocket all the money.

Year on year, Dyer dodged the police and the inspectors of the newly-formed NSPCC.

She was caught once after a doctor was called to certify the death of one child too many and raised the alarm.

But instead of manslaughter, she was convicted of causing a child to die by neglect and served six months' hard labour in prison, an experience that nearly destroyed her.

After that she tried going back to nursing. She had spells in mental hospitals after suicide attempts.

But always she returned to baby farming, eventually drawing her own family into the business.

She stopped calling doctors to issue death certificates and disposed of the bodies secretly.

They moved homes frequently - Bristol, Reading, Cardiff, London - as often as they scented the police closing in or mothers and fathers on their trail trying to reclaim their children.

The killing stopped only after a bargeman piloting a cargo up the Thames at Reading saw a brown paper parcel lying in in shallow water near the bank.

He fished it out with a boat hook, pulled at one end and a leg and a tiny human foot appeared.

A police inspection revealed the body of a little girl, aged six to 12 months.

White tape was knotted round her neck. One piece of the brown paper had a railway label on it from Temple Meads Station, Bristol and the faint outline of handwriting.

A name - "Mrs Thomas" - and an address in Reading could just be made out.

Four days later, on April 3, Good Friday, police raided that address and were immediately struck by the stench of human decomposition, though no body was found.

But white tape was, in a sewing basket, and in cupboards were bundles of telegrams arranging adoptions, pawn tickets for children's clothing, receipts for advertisements and letters from mothers inquiring after their little ones.

In the past few months alone, they worked out, 20 children at least had been placed in the care of "Mrs Thomas", now revealed as Amelia Dyer.

The police had arrived just in time. She was about to do a moonlight flit again, this time to Somerset.

The body found by the bargee turned out to be that of Helena Fry, illegitimate offspring of Mary Fry, a servant girl from Bristol, and a well-to-do local merchant.

The child had been handed over to Dyer at Bristol Temple Meads station on March 5.

But when Dyer got home to Reading that evening, all she had with her was a brown paper parcel two feet long.

She hid it in the house, until, after three weeks, the smell became unbearable.

Then she was seen leaving the house with the parcel, saying she was going to the pawnshop.

In fact she threw in the bundle in the river. But it did not sink, as the bargee discovered.

The river was now dragged. Three tiny bodies were found, then the carpet bag with Doris and Harry inside, her last victims.

The next day, Evelina Marmon, whose name had cropped up in Dyer's correspondence, was brought to Reading and identified her daughter on the mortuary slab.

It had been a mere 11 days since she had entrusted her child to "Mrs Harding".

"She was in perfect health when I sent her away," was all the distraught woman could mutter.

Dyer was hanged at Newgate Prison after a trial in which her plea of insanity was rejected.

Her daughter gave graphic evidence that ensured her conviction (while going unpunished herself for

reasons still not clear). The jury was out for just four-and-a-half minutes before condemning her.

The details of what she had done caused a scandal. Stricter adoption laws gave local authorities the power to police baby farms and stamp out abuse. Personal ads of newspapers were to be scrutinised.

But baby trafficking did not stop. Two years after Dyer's execution, railway workers inspecting carriages shunted into a siding at Newton Abbot from the Plymouth express found a parcel tied up with string.

Inside was a three-week-old girl, cold and wet but just alive.

She was the daughter of a widow, Jane Hill, and had been given to a woman named Mrs Stewart for £12.

"The little one would have a good home and a parent's love and care," Mrs Stewart had written. Then she had picked up the baby at Plymouth - and dumped her on the next train.

Who was "Mrs Stewart"? None other, it was thought, than Polly, Amelia Dyer's daughter. The evil lived on.

DYER, Amelia Elizabeth (England)

That a man should kill a child is appalling; that a woman should kill a child is unthinkable; but a woman who kills eight children and perhaps many more . . .

Amelia Dyer was known as the Reading Baby-farmer; having once been a member of the Salvation Army, she was a figure of trust to those parents or guardians who, over the years, accepted her offer to adopt unwanted children, and were more than happy to pay her the regular boarding fees for their upkeep. But their trust was badly shaken when in 1885 a boatman on the Thames noticed something unusual floating in the water. Rescuing it, he was shocked to find that, wrapped in a brown paper parcel, was a dead baby, with a tape tied tightly round its neck. The parcel bore an address: Mrs Thomas, Piggotts Road, Lower Caversham.

The police immediately went to the address, only to discover that their quarry had moved away and had, moreover, changed her name. Worse was to follow, for within the next few days two more bodies were found floating in the river, each in a separate parcel, each having been strangled by the tape around its throat.

In the widespread hunt that ensued, Mrs Dyer, alias Thomas, alias Harding, alias Stanfield, was found, and when arrested on a charge of murdering a little girl named Fry, admitted her guilt, adding, 'You'll know all mine by the tapes around their necks.'

That statement was tragically borne out when no fewer than a further four small corpses were fished out of the Thames, and it was suspected that there could have been many more similarly strangled over the years during which she had been a babyfarmer, four more children having recently disappeared.

It would appear that she would place an advertisement in local papers, worded as follows:

I should be glad to have a dear little baby girl, one I could bring up and call my own. First I must tell you we are plain, homely people, in fairly good circumstances. We live in our own house. I have a good and comfortable home. We are out in the country and sometimes I am alone a good deal. I do not want a child for money's sake but for company and home comfort. Myself and my husband are dearly fond of children. I have no child of my own. A child with me will have a good home and a mother's love and care.

We belong to the Church of England. Although I want to bring the child up as my own, I should not mind the mother or any other person coming to see the child at any time. It would be a satisfaction to see and know the child was getting on all right. I only hope we can come to terms.

The latter offer of access was impossible, of course, Amelia Dyer repeatedly changing her name and address. Women who responded to the advertisement usually handed over a parcel of clothes, ten pounds in cash, a considerable sum in those days, and the baby – which she never saw again.

When her house was searched by the police, no less than three hundredweight (336 lb) of children's clothes were found, together with a large number of pawn tickets for baby clothes.

In May 1896 Amelia appeared in court charged with murdering a four-month-old baby girl named Doris Marmon and a boy, Harry Simmons. Her plea, that she was insane, was not accepted, the jury taking only five minutes to find her guilty, and she was sentenced to death. Confident of a reprieve, doubtless because of her age – she was 57 – she spent her time in the condemned cell praying and writing poems, one of which survives:

By nature, Lord, I know with grief,
I am a poor fallen leaf
Shrivelled and dry, near unto death
Driven with sin, as with a breath.
But if by Grace I am made new,
Washed in the blood of Jesus, too,
Like to a lily, I shall stand
Spotless and pure at His right hand.

And not content with the hypocritical tone of the verse, she had the appalling gall to sign it 'Mother'.

In accordance with the regulations, which stipulated that executions should take place at 8 a.m. on the first day after the intervention of three Sundays from the day on which the sentence was passed – in this case 10 June 1896 – Amelia herself was taken into care, James Billington, the public executioner, a muscular ex-coalminer, having temporarily adopted her. He escorted her up the steps of the scaffold behind the high walls of Newgate Prison and there guided her on to the trapdoors, where he hooded her. The prison bell had already been tolling for the past fifteen minutes and would continue to do so for the same length of time after the execution had taken place. Crowds had gathered outside, waiting to see the regulatory black flag which would be raised on the prison's flagpole at the moment the trapdoors opened, and also, within the next few minutes, to read the Certificate of Death which had to be displayed near the principal entrance to the prison. They did not have long to wait, for Billington, never one to linger, and no doubt recalling the manner in which Amelia Dyer had strangled her helpless charges, positioned his version of a tape, the noose, around her neck and swiftly operated the drop – sending the cold-blooded killer plummeting into the depths of the pit.

Whether Amelia's spirit departed with her, though, is another matter, it being rumoured that her ghost haunted the chief warder's office for some years following her execution.

Amazing True Stories of Female Executions by Geoffrey Abbott

SEX: F RACE: W TYPE: N MOTIVE: CE

MO: "Baby farmer" who killed infants of unwed mothers.

DISPOSITION: Hanged June 10, 1896.

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as four-month-old Doris Marmon, thirteen-month-old Harry Simmonds and the daughter of Elizabeth Goulding. The others were to remain unidentified. She soon confessed, saying "You'll know all mine by the tape around their necks." While in Reading police station she made two attempts to commit suicide.

She came to trial at the Old Bailey in May 1896 charged with just the murder of Doris Marmon, to which she pleaded guilty. The defence tried to prove insanity but failed, despite her dubious mental history. The jury took five minutes to find Dyer guilty and she was sentenced to death. James Billington hanged her at Newgate on 10th June 1896. Police suspected that at least 20 other children had disappeared in a similar manner in the few months before her arrest.

Murder-UK.com

Dyer Amelia

Amelia Dyer was a 'baby farmer'. Someone who, for a fee, would look after children, usually illegitimate, until a home could be found for them. Mrs Dyer was 57-years-old and used the Salvation Army as a reference. In 1895 she moved to Reading and began advertising.

It wasn't long before small bodies were being fished out of the Thames. One of the bodies recovered had a tape around its neck and was wrapped in a parcel. The paper enclosing the corpse had an address on it and this was traced to Mrs Dyer, but she had moved on.

She was eventually arrested in April 1896. By May seven tiny bodies had been recovered, all had the tape around their necks and all were parcelled. She soon confessed, saying You'll know all mine by the tape around their necks.

She came to trial in May 1896 at the Old Bailey. She was in fact only tried for the murder of 4 month old Doris Marmon. The defence tried to prove insanity but failed. The motive for the murders seemed to be nothing more than greed, as soon as she was in receipt of the boarding fees she would kill the children to make room for more. The jury took five minutes to find her guilty and she was sentenced to death. She was hanged at Newgate on 10th June 1896 by James Billington.

Amelia Elizabeth Dyer née Hobley (1838 – 10 June 1896) was the most prolific baby farm murderer of Victorian England. She was tried and hanged for one murder, but there is little doubt she was responsible for many more similar deaths—possibly 400 or more—over a period of perhaps twenty years.

Background

Unlike many of her generation, Amelia Dyer was not the product of grinding poverty. She was born the youngest of 5 (with 3 brothers, Thomas, James and William, and a sister, Ann) in the small village of Pyle Marsh, just east of Bristol (now part of Bristol's urban sprawl known as *Pile Marsh*), the daughter of a master shoemaker, Samuel Hobley, and Sarah Hobley née Weymouth. She learned to read and write and developed a love of literature and poetry. However, her somewhat privileged childhood was marred by the mental illness of her mother, caused by typhus. Amelia witnessed her mother's violent fits and was obliged to care for her until she died raving in 1848. Researchers would later comment on the effect this had on Amelia, and also what it would teach Amelia about the signs exhibited by those who appear to lose their mind through illness.

After her mother's death Amelia lived with an aunt in Bristol for a while, before serving an apprenticeship with a corset maker. Her father died in 1859, her eldest brother Thomas inheriting the family shoe

business. In 1861, at the age of 24, Amelia became permanently estranged from at least one of her brothers, James, and moved into lodgings in Trinity Street, Bristol. There she married George Thomas. George was 59 and they both lied about their ages on the marriage certificate to reduce the age gap. George deducted 11 years from his age and Amelia added 6 years to her age—many sources later reported this age as fact, causing much confusion.

Nursing

For a couple of years, after marrying George Thomas, she trained as a nurse, a somewhat gruelling job in Victorian times, but it was seen as a respectable occupation, and it enabled her to acquire useful skills. From contact with a midwife, Ellen Dane, she learnt of an easier way to earn a living—using her own home to provide lodgings for young women who had conceived illegitimately and then farming off the babies for adoption or allowing them to die of neglect and malnutrition (Ellen Dane was forced to decamp to the USA, shortly after meeting Amelia, to escape the attention of the authorities).

Unmarried mothers in Victorian England often struggled to gain an income, since the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act had removed any financial obligation from the fathers of illegitimate children, whilst bringing up their children in a society where single parenthood and illegitimacy were stigmatized. This led to the practice of baby farming in which individuals acted as adoption or fostering agents, in return for regular payments or a single, up-front fee from the babies' mothers. Many businesses were set up to take in these young women and care for them until they gave birth. The mothers subsequently left their unwanted babies to be looked after as "nurse children".

The predicament of the parents involved was often exploited for financial gain: if a baby had well-off parents who were simply anxious to keep the birth secret, the single fee might be as much as £80. £50 might be negotiated if the father of the child wanted to hush up his involvement. However, it was more common for these expectant young women, whose "immorality" even precluded acceptance, at that time, into workhouses, to be impoverished. Such women would be charged about £5.

Unscrupulous carers resorted to starving the farmed-out babies, to save money and even to hasten death. Noisy or demanding babies could be sedated with easily-available alcohol and/or opiates. *Godfrey's Cordial*—known colloquially as "Mother's Friend", (a syrup containing opium)—was a popular choice, but there were several other similar preparations. Many children died as a result of such dubious practices: "Opium killed far more infants through starvation than directly through overdose." Dr. Greenhow, investigating for the Privy Council, noted how children "kept in a state of continued narcotism will be thereby disinclined for food, and be but imperfectly nourished." Death from severe malnutrition would result, but the coroner was likely to record the death as "'debility from birth,' or 'lack of breast milk,' or simply 'starvation.'" Mothers who chose to reclaim or simply check on the welfare of their children could often encounter difficulties, but some would simply be too frightened or ashamed to tell the police about any suspected wrongdoing. Even the authorities often had problems tracing any children that were reported missing.

This was the world opened up to her by the now-departed Ellen Danes. Amelia had had to leave nursing with the birth of a daughter, Ellen Thomas. In 1869 the elderly George Thomas died and Amelia needed an income.

Murders

Amelia was apparently keen to make money from baby farming, and alongside taking in expectant women, she would advertise to nurse and adopt a baby, in return for a substantial one-off payment and adequate clothing for the child. In her advertisements and meetings with clients, she assured them that she was respectable, married, and that she would provide a safe and loving home for the child.

At some point in her baby farming career, Amelia was prepared to forego the expense and inconvenience of letting the children die through neglect and starvation; soon after the receipt of each

child, she murdered them, thus allowing her to pocket most or all of the entire fee.

For some time, Dyer eluded the resulting interest of police. She was eventually caught in 1879 after a doctor was suspicious about the number of child deaths he had been called to certify in Dyer's care. However, instead of being convicted of murder or manslaughter, she was sentenced to six months' hard labour for neglect. The experience allegedly almost destroyed her mentally, though others have expressed incredulity at the leniency of the sentence when compared to those handed out for lesser crimes at that time.

Upon release, she attempted to resume her nursing career. She had spells in mental hospitals due to her alleged mental instability and suicidal tendencies; these always coincided with times when it was convenient for her to "disappear". Being a former asylum nurse Amelia knew how to behave to ensure a relatively comfortable existence as an asylum inmate. Dyer appears to have begun abusing alcohol and opium-based products early in her killing career; her mental instability could have been related to her substance abuse. In 1890, Dyer cared for the illegitimate baby of a governess. When she returned to visit the child, the governess was immediately suspicious and stripped the baby to see if a birthmark was present on one of its hips. It wasn't, and prolonged suspicions by the authorities led to Dyer having, or feigning, a breakdown. Dyer at one point drank two bottles of laudanum in a serious suicide attempt, but her long-term abuse had built up her tolerance to opium products, so she survived.

Inevitably, she returned to baby farming, and murder. Dyer realized the folly of involving doctors to issue death certificates and began disposing of the bodies herself. The precarious nature and extent of her activities again prompted undesirable attention; she was alert to the attentions of police—and of parents seeking to reclaim their children. She and her family frequently relocated to different towns and cities to escape suspicion, regain anonymity—and to acquire new business. Over the years, Dyer used a succession of aliases.

In 1893, Dyer was discharged from her final committal at Wells mental asylum. Unlike previous "breakdowns" this had been a most disagreeable experience and she never entered another asylum. Two years later, Dyer moved to Caversham, Berkshire, accompanied by an unsuspecting associate, Jane "Granny" Smith, whom Amelia had recruited from a brief spell in a workhouse and Amelia's daughter and son-in-law, Mary Ann (known as Polly) and Arthur Palmer. This was followed by a move to Kensington Road, Reading, Berkshire later the same year. Smith was persuaded by Amelia to be referred to as 'mother' in front of innocent women handing over their children. This was an effort to present a caring mother-daughter image.

Case study: the murder of Doris Marmon

In January 1896, Evelina Marmon, a popular 25-year-old barmaid, gave birth to an illegitimate daughter, Doris, in a boarding house in Cheltenham. She quickly sought offers of adoption, and placed an advertisement in the "Miscellaneous" section of the *Bristol Times & Mirror* newspaper. It simply read: "Wanted, respectable woman to take young child." Marmon intended to go back to work and hoped to eventually reclaim her child.

Coincidentally, next to her own, was an advertisement reading: "Married couple with no family would adopt healthy child, nice country home. Terms, £10". Marmon responded, to a "Mrs. Harding", and a few days later she received a reply from Dyer. From Oxford Road in Reading, "Mrs Harding" wrote that "I should be glad to have a dear little baby girl, one I could bring up and call my own." She continued: "We are plain, homely people, in fairly good circumstances. I don't want a child for money's sake, but for company and home comfort. ... Myself and my husband are dearly fond of children. I have no child of my own. A child with me will have a good home and a mother's love".

Evelina Marmon wanted to pay a more affordable, weekly fee for the care of her daughter, but "Mrs Harding" insisted on being given the one-off payment in advance. Marmon was in desperate straits, so she reluctantly agreed to pay the £10, and a week later "Mrs Harding" arrived in Cheltenham.

Marmon was apparently surprised by Dyer's advanced age and stocky appearance, but Dyer seemed affectionate towards Doris. Evelina handed over her daughter, a cardboard box of clothes and the £10. Still distressed at having to give up care for her daughter, Evelina accompanied Dyer to Cheltenham station, and then on to Gloucester. She returned to her lodgings "a broken woman". A few days later, she received a letter from "Mrs Harding" saying all was well; Marmon wrote back, but received no reply.

Dyer did not travel to Reading, as she had told Marmon. She went instead to 76 Mayo Road, Willesden, London where her 23-year-old daughter Polly was staying. There, Dyer quickly found some white edging tape used in dressmaking, wound it twice around the baby's neck and tied a knot. Death would not have been immediate. (Amelia later said "I used to like to watch them with the tape around their neck, but it was soon all over with them")

Both women allegedly helped to wrap the body in a napkin. They kept some of the clothes Marmon had packed; the rest was destined for the pawnbroker. Dyer paid the rent to the unwitting landlady, and gave her a pair of child's boots as a present for her little girl. The following day, Wednesday 1 April 1896, another child, named Harry Simmons, was taken to Mayo Road. However, with no spare white edging tape available, the length around Doris' corpse was removed and used to strangle the 13 month-old boy.

On April 2, both bodies were stacked into a carpet bag, along with bricks for added weight. Dyer then headed for Reading. At a secluded spot she knew well near a weir at Caversham Lock, she forced the carpet bag through railings into the River Thames.

Dyer's downfall

Discovery of corpses

Unknown to Dyer, on 30 March 1896, a package was retrieved from the Thames at Reading by a bargeman. It contained the body of a baby girl, later identified as Helena Fry. In the small detective force available to Reading Borough Police headed by Chief Constable George Tewsley, a Detective Constable Anderson made a crucial breakthrough. As well as finding a label from Temple Meads station, Bristol, he used microscopic analysis of the wrapping paper, and deciphered a faintly-legible name—Mrs Thomas—and an address.

This evidence was enough to lead police to Dyer, but they still had no strong evidence to connect her directly with a serious crime. Additional evidence they gleaned from witnesses, and information obtained from Bristol police, only served to increase their concerns, and D.C. Anderson, with Sgt. James, placed Dyer's home under surveillance. Subsequent intelligence suggested that Dyer would abscond if she became at all suspicious. The officers decided to use a young woman as a decoy, hoping she would be able to secure a meeting with Dyer to discuss her services. This may have been designed to help the detectives to positively link Dyer to her business activities, or it may have simply given them a reliable opportunity to arrest her.

It transpired that Dyer was expecting her new client (the decoy) to call, but instead she found detectives waiting on her doorstep. On April 3 (Good Friday), police raided her home. They were apparently struck by the stench of human decomposition, although no human remains were found. There was however, plenty of other related evidence, including white edging tape, telegrams regarding adoption arrangements, pawn tickets for children's clothing, receipts for advertisements and letters from mothers inquiring about the well-being of their children.

The police calculated that in the previous few months alone, at least twenty children had been placed in the care of a "Mrs. Thomas", now revealed to be Amelia Dyer. It also appeared that she was about to move home again, this time to Somerset. This rate of murder has led to some estimates that Mrs Dyer may, over the course of decades, have killed over 400 babies and children, making her one of the most prolific murderers ever, as well as the most prolific murderess ever.

Helena Fry, the baby removed from the River Thames on March 30, had been handed over to Dyer at Temple Meads station on March 5. That same evening, she arrived home carrying only a brown paper parcel. She hid the package in the house but, after three weeks, the odor of decomposition prompted her to dump the dead baby in the river. As it was not weighted adequately, it had been easily spotted.

Amelia Dyer was arrested on April 4 and charged with murder. Her son-in-law Arthur Palmer was charged as an accessory. During April, the Thames was dragged and six more bodies were discovered, including Doris Marmon and Harry Simmons—Dyer's last victims. Each baby had been strangled with white tape, which as she later told the police "was how you could tell it was one of mine". Eleven days after handing her daughter to Dyer, Evelina Marmon, whose name had emerged in items kept by Dyer, identified her daughter's remains.

Inquest and trial

At the inquest into the deaths in early May, no evidence was found that Mary Ann or Arthur Palmer had acted as Dyer's accomplices. Arthur Palmer was discharged as the result of a confession written by Amelia Dyer. In Reading gaol she wrote (with her own spelling and punctuation preserved):

Sir will you kindly grant me the favour of presenting this to the magistrates on Saturday the 18th instant I have made this statement out, for I may not have the opportunity then I must relieve my mind I do know and I feel my days are numbered on this earth but I do feel it is an awful thing drawing innocent people into trouble I do know I shal have to answer before my Maker in Heaven for the awful crimes I have committed but as God Almighty is my judge in Heaven a on Hearth neither my daughter Mary Ann Palmer nor her husband Alfred Ernest Palmer I do most solemnly declare neither of them had any thing at all to do with it, they never knew I contemplated doing such a wicked thing until it was to late I am speaking the truth and nothing but the truth as I hope to be forgiven, I myself and I alone must stand before my Maker in Heaven to give an answer for it all witnes my hand Amelia Dyer.

—April 16, 1896

On 22 May 1896, Amelia Dyer appeared at the Old Bailey and pleaded guilty to one murder, that of Doris Marmon. Her family and associates testified at her trial that they had been growing suspicious and uneasy about her activities, and it emerged that Dyer had narrowly escaped discovery on several occasions. Evidence from a man who had seen and spoken to Dyer when she had disposed of the two bodies at Caversham Lock also proved significant. Her daughter had given graphic evidence that ensured Amelia Dyer's conviction.

The only defence Dyer offered was insanity: she had been twice committed to asylums in Bristol. However, the prosecution argued successfully that her exhibitions of mental instability had been a ploy to avoid suspicion; both committals were said to have coincided with times when Dyer was concerned her crimes might have been exposed.

It took the jury only four and a half minutes to find her guilty. In her 3 weeks in the condemned cell, she filled five exercise books with her "last true and only confession". Visited the night before her execution by the chaplain and asked if she had anything to confess, she offered him her exercise books, saying, "isn't this enough?" Curiously she was subpoenaed to appear as a witness in Polly's trial for murder, set for a week *after* her own execution date. However it was ruled that Amelia was already legally dead once sentenced and that therefore her evidence would be inadmissible. Thus her execution was not delayed. On the eve of her execution Amelia heard that the charges against Polly had been dropped. She was hanged by James Billington at Newgate Prison on Wednesday, 10 June 1896. Asked on the scaffold if she had anything to say, she said "I have nothing to say", just before being dropped at 9am precisely.

Later developments

It is uncertain how many more children Amelia Dyer murdered. However, inquiries from mothers, evidence of other witnesses, and material found in Dyer's homes, including letters and many babies' clothes, pointed to many more.

The Dyer case caused a scandal. She became known as the "Ogress of Reading", and she inspired a popular ballad:

The old baby farmer, the wretched Miss Dyer
At the Old Bailey her wages is paid.
In times long ago, we'd 'a' made a big fy-er
And roasted so nicely that wicked old jade.

Subsequently, adoption laws were made stricter, giving local authorities the power to police baby farms in the hope of stamping out abuse. Despite this and the scrutinizing of newspaper personal ads, the trafficking and abuse of infants did not stop. Two years after Dyer's execution, railway workers inspecting carriages at Newton Abbot, Devon found a parcel. Inside was a three-week-old girl, but though cold and wet, she was alive. The daughter of a widow, Jane Hill, the baby had been given to a Mrs. Stewart, for £12. She had picked up the baby at Plymouth—and apparently dumped her on the next train. It has been claimed that "Mrs. Stewart" was Polly, the daughter of Amelia Dyer.

Identified victims

- Doris Marmon, 4 months old
- Harry Simmons, 13 months old
- Helena Fry, Age unknown, 1 year old or less

Jack the Ripper Speculation

Because she was a murderer alive at the time of the Jack the Ripper killings, some have suggested that Amelia Dyer was Jack the Ripper, who killed the prostitutes through botched abortions. This suggestion was put forward by author William Stewart, although he preferred Mary Pearcey as his chosen suspect. There is, however, no evidence to connect Dyer to the Jack the Ripper murders.

Wikipedia.org

Amelia Dyer – The Reading Baby-farmer

Amelia Elizabeth Dyer was perhaps the best known and most prolific murderous baby farmer.

Mrs Dyer was 56 years old when she moved from Bristol to Caversham in Reading in 1895 and began advertising for babies to look after. On the 30th of March of 1896, a bargeman recovered the corpse of 15-month old Helena Fry from the river Thames at Reading. Helena's body was wrapped in a brown paper parcel which had the name of a Mrs. Thomas and her address on it – Piggott's Road Lower Caversham. Mrs. Thomas was one of Mrs. Dyer's aliases.

It took the police some time to trace Mrs. Dyer as she had already moved on, changing her address quite frequently and also using various aliases. In the meantime, a Cheltenham barmaid, 23 year old Evelina Marmon, had answered a newspaper advert from a "Mrs Harding" seeking a child for adoption. She met "Mrs Harding" and paid her a £10 fee to take her four month old baby daughter Doris on the 31st of March 1896. She felt comfortable with the arrangement as "Mrs Harding" appeared to be a

respectable and motherly person. The following day Mrs. Dyer "adopted" another child, Harry Simmons.

The police finally located Mrs. Dyer, who they kept under surveillance for several days before mounting a "sting" operation using a young woman to pose as a potential customer. She was arrested on April the 4th, 1896 when she opened the door to the person she thought would be this customer only to find two policemen standing there.

The two tiny bodies of Doris and Harry were found in the Thames on April the 10th, 1896, both wrapped in a carpet bag and both with white tapes round their necks. In all, the corpses of seven babies, all of whom had been strangled, were recovered from the Thames and each one had the same white tape around their neck. She soon confessed saying, "You'll know all mine by the tape around their necks."

She made two attempts to commit suicide in Reading police station. She came to trial before Mr. Justice Hawkins at the Old Bailey on the 21st and 22nd of May 1896 charged with Doris' murder in the first instance, so that if she was acquitted, she could be tried for another. This was standard practice until recently in cases of multiple murder. Miss Marmon identified Mrs Dyer in court as "Mrs Harding". The defence tried to prove insanity but failed to convince the jury who took just 5 minutes to find her guilty. Although there was strong evidence of her dubious sanity, her crimes were also appalling and the jury seemed to give far more weight to that aspect. Mr. Justice Hawkins sentenced her to death.

During her three weeks in the condemned cell, she filled five exercise books with her "last true and only confession." In a compassionate move the authorities removed her from Newgate for a few hours so that she would not have to hear the hanging of Milsom, Fowler and Seaman the day before her own execution. The chaplain visited her on the evening of the 9th and asked her if she had anything to confess - she offered him her exercise books saying "isn't this enough?"

She was hanged the following morning (10th of June 1896) by James Billington, becoming at 57, the oldest woman to be executed since 1843. She was given a drop of five feet as she weighed some 15 stones. Her ghost was said to haunt Newgate prison. No one will ever know the exact number of her victims but at the time of her arrest, she had been carrying on her trade for 15 to 20 years. She may have murdered as many as 400 babies in all.

CapitalPunishmentUK.org

Amelia Elizabeth Dyer was perhaps the best known and most prolific murderous baby farmer. She was convicted of the murder of 4 month old Doris Marmon who had been entrusted to her care, having received £10 to look after her.

Doris' tiny body was found in the Thames on April the 10th 1896, together with that of one year old Harry Simmons, both wrapped in a carpet bag and both with her trade mark white tapes round their necks. The Crown decided to proceed only with Doris' murder in the first instance, so that if Mrs. Dyer was acquitted they would be able to try her for another. This was standard practice until recently.

Mrs Dyer who was fifty-seven years old at the time of her arrest moved to Reading in 1895 where she began advertising for babies to look after.

On the 30th of March of 1895 a bargeman recovered the corpse of 15 month old Helena Fry from the river Thames at Reading. Helena's body was wrapped in a brown paper parcel which had Mrs. Dyer's address on it. It took the police some time to trace the identity of the owner of the parcel as Mrs. Dyer had moved on, changing her address quite frequently and also using various aliases.

They eventually caught up with her and she was arrested on April the 4th 1896. The corpses of seven

babies, all of whom had been strangled had been recovered from the Thames, all had the same white tape around their necks. She soon confessed, saying "You'll know all mine by the tape around their necks." While in Reading police station she made two attempts to commit suicide.

She came to trial at the Old Bailey the 21st of May 1896, the trial lasting two days. The defence tried to prove insanity but failed to convince the jury who took just five minutes to find her guilty. Although there was strong evidence of her dubious sanity her crimes were also appalling and the jury seemed to give far more weight to that aspect. Mr. Justice Hawkins sentenced her to death and while in the condemned cell she filled five exercise books with her "last true and only confession."

She decided not to appeal and so her execution was set for three weeks after sentence. The chaplain visited her the night before her execution and asked her if she had anything to confess - she offered him her exercise books saying "isn't this enough?"

She was hanged the following morning (10th June 1896) by James Billington at Newgate, becoming the oldest woman to be executed since 1843. No-one will ever know the exact number of her victims, but at the time of her arrest she had been carrying on her trade for fifteen to twenty years.

The baby butcher: One of Victorian Britain's most evil murderers exposed

By Tony Rennell

September 28, 2007

The advertisement in the "Miscellaneous" column of the Bristol Times & Mirror newspaper was poignant.

"Wanted," it read, "respectable woman to take young child."

It was a sadly common request in Victorian Britain, where life was particularly hard for unmarried mothers.

The ad had been placed by 25-year-old Evelina Marmon, who two months earlier, in January 1896, had given birth in a boarding house in Cheltenham to a little girl she named Doris.

Evelina was a God-fearing farmer's daughter who had gone astray, left the farm for city life and resorted to work as a barmaid in the saloon of the Plough Hotel, an old coaching inn.

With her blonde hair, busty figure and quick wit, she was popular with its male customers - though which one of them made her pregnant has gone unrecorded.

And now she was deserted, with a baby she loved but knew she could not bring up on her own.

She would have to find a foster home for little Doris - to have her "adopted out", in the language of the time - go back to work and hope in time to be able to reclaim her child.

Quite by chance, next to her own ad, was another: "Married couple with no family would adopt healthy child, nice country home. Terms, £10."

It seemed the answer to her prayers, and she quickly contacted the name at the bottom, a Mrs Harding.

From Oxford Road in Reading, Mrs Harding replied in ecstatic terms.

"I should be glad to have a dear little baby girl, one I could bring up and call my own."

Amelia Dyer killed 400 babies in the late 1800s

BY Mara Bovsun

nydailynews.com

DAILY NEWS

Amelia Dyer killed 400 babies in the late 1800s

BY Mara Bovsun

NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

Updated: Saturday, June 1, 2013, 4:00 PM



(London Stereoscopic Company/Getty Images)

A bargeman navigating the River Thames in 1896 found the corpse of a baby girl, which led to arrest of baby killer Amelia Dyer.

On the morning of March 30, 1896, a bargeman navigating up the River Thames near the town of Reading pulled a small package, wrapped in brown paper, from the shallows. It held the tiny flannel-wrapped corpse of a baby girl, less than a year old.

A length of white dressmaker's tape was bound tightly around the child's neck and her eyes were bulging, leading to the unmistakable conclusion that she had been murdered.

In Britain at that time, finding an infant's corpse was nothing terribly unusual. There were hundreds each

year. Some were thought to be stillborn, other victims of neglect or violence, but there was usually no way to find out who they were, where they came from, or how they died.

But the body fished out of the Thames that morning was different, because it offered police a clue to the dead girl's killer — a few faded scribbled words that could be discerned on the soggy paper: "Mrs. Thomas, 26 Piggotts Road, Lower Caversham, Reading."

They were the alias and address for a woman who had made a 30-year career of murdering babies. Her real name was Amelia Dyer and she was what was euphemistically known as an "angel maker." For a modest fee, Dyer took in babies whose mothers could not or would not care for them. Some of these women assumed that she would find new homes for the children or raise them herself. More often, though, the mothers disappeared, without a question or care about the fate of their inconvenient offspring.

Dyer was born in 1838, the daughter of a shoemaker and his wife in a town near Bristol. Trained as a nurse and midwife, Dyer started helping women get rid of unwanted children in the mid-1860s. Although no one knows an exact figure, the estimate for the number of young lives she may have snuffed out is somewhere around 400. To this day, some speculate that Dyer and Jack the Ripper, her contemporary, were one and the same.

Her trade was known as "baby farming" and it was a thriving business in the Victorian era, when having a child out of wedlock could lead to a life in the gutter. But married women with more mouths to feed than they could afford, widows, and mistresses of rich men also needed the help of an experienced baby farmer from time to time.

Finding one was as easy as picking up a newspaper. There, often in close proximity to news stories describing the latest nameless dead baby that had been found the day before, were ads offering hope to unwed mothers, like this one that Dyer placed in 1879: "MARRIED LADY wishes to have care of a child. Would adopt one."

Along with new mothers, these ads attracted women in advanced stages of pregnancy, who relied on Dyer's expertise as a midwife to deliver and immediately smother the infant, making the murder appear to be a stillbirth.



A bargeman navigating the River Thames in 1896 found the corpse of a baby girl, which led to arrest of baby killer Amelia Dyer.

A bargeman navigating the River Thames in 1896 found the corpse of a baby girl, which led to arrest of baby killer Amelia Dyer.

Early in her career, Dyer had agreed to foster children for a fee and then would starve them to death. She went to jail, doing six months of hard labor, in 1879 for causing the death of a child through neglect. After her release, she tried another line of work, but before long, she was back placing want ads for babies.

By the spring of 1896, Dyer had moved several times, and had a daughter of her own, Polly, and a son-in-law Arthur Palmer, who had followed her into the family business. She also had a serious addiction to Godfrey's Cordials, a popular opium mixture and the drug of choice for silencing noisy children, sometimes forever. It was also known as Mother's Friend.

The name and address on the package holding the dead girl who was pulled from the Thames eventually led police to Dyer's home. There, they were first struck by the overpowering smells of decay, as well as

piles of receipts for baby-wanted ads, health and adoption records, and pawn tickets for children's clothes.

They also found the same white dressmaker's tape that had choked the life out of the tiny victim recovered from the river. The tape was Dyer's trademark. "That's how you can tell they were mine," she later admitted.

On April 4, police arrested her for murder, charged her son-in-law as an accessory and set about dragging the Thames. They found six bodies, including two, a boy and girl, who had been stuffed into a carpetbag and tossed in the river on April 2. These children were her last victims.

Some of the papers found in Dyer's home helped police find one of the mothers, Evelina Marmon, a barmaid, who identified the girl in the carpet bag as her daughter, Doris. "That's the dreadful woman to whom I handed Doris," Marmon said as she picked Dyer out of a lineup.

Dyer went on trial on May 22, for just one murder, that of Marmon. She confessed but her lawyers tried to save her life with an insanity defense, citing her opium addiction and her history of time in mental hospitals.

The jury took less than five minutes to declare her sane, guilty, and worthy of the ultimate penalty. The angel maker spent her last days writing a voluminous account of her crimes, and offered no last words as the hangman put the noose around her neck on June 10, 1896.

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'Amityville Horror' house back on the market for \$850,000

Updated June 3, 2016 5:31 PM By Valerie Kellogg valerie.kellogg@newsday.com

newsday.com



The house that inspired

The house that inspired "The Amityville Horror" book, films and a Long Island cultural phenomenon has come on the the market. It is listed for \$850,000 in June 2016. Photo Credit: Coldwell Banker Harbor Light

The waterfront home that inspired "The Amityville Horror" book, films and a Long Island cultural phenomenon has come back on the market.

Owner Caroline D'Antonio has listed the 5,000-square-foot, five-bedroom, 3 ½-bathroom 1927 Dutch Colonial for \$850,000 with Jerry O'Neill of Coldwell Banker Harbor Light.

D'Antonio and her husband, David, who died last year, purchased the gray house with black shutters in 2010 for \$950,000. The property, which is on the Amityville River leading to the Great South Bay, had been placed on the market earlier that year for \$1.15 million.

The 50-by-237-foot property at 108 Ocean Ave. is on a canal and comes with a boathouse and boat slip, which figured prominently in the book and 1979 film and still draw curiosity seekers, especially around Halloween. No-trespassing signs are staked in the ground both on the sides of the house facing Ocean Avenue — and in back facing the water, where even boaters stop to take photos.

In 1974, a then-23-year-old Ronald DeFeo Jr. killed his parents, two younger brothers and two younger sisters at the house, shooting them with a rifle as they slept. (DeFeo is now serving 25 years to life at the Green Haven Correctional Facility in upstate Dutchess County.) The Lutz family moved into the house a year later. They left the house in 1976, later providing audiotapes to author Jay Anson describing paranormal experiences that became the basis for the book "The Amityville Horror: A True Story."

The D'Antonios "enjoyed the house," O'Neill said, although their time there was not necessarily quiet. "Tourists came and took pictures on the sidewalk, selfies, that kind of stuff," he said.

The couple made improvements such as redoing the kitchen and bathrooms, updating mechanical systems and finishing the basement, said O'Neill, whose brother once owned the house. "It is priced to sell," he said. "It's a good value, a lot of features for that kind of money."

In an exclusive media tour inside the house on Friday afternoon — which revealed elegant

period details such as oak floors, leaded glass, built-in shelves and cupboards and a heated sunroom overlooking the water with 11 double-hung windows — agents and their buyers seemed to agree.

"It's lovely, beautiful," said Amityville native Chris Geiger, 40, an accountant who visited the house with his wife, Kerri, who said, "It could turn into a bidding war. It's a great price." They said they are unfazed by the home's history, and later returned to measure closets.

The house is "on a high elevation" and was therefore "high and dry" during superstorm Sandy, he added.

David D'Antonio, a teacher, died in 2015, according to obituaries. Caroline D'Antonio has since purchased a condominium, and family friends are living in the house, said O'Neill. "Obviously she doesn't need a house that size," he said.

"I don't know what to expect," O'Neill said of placing the house Friday on the open market. "The one thing we are doing is we are controlling the showing activity to the extent that we can only have serious, qualified buyers make appointments."

Agents who went to a broker's open house Friday showed their real estate licenses at the door. Before being able to tour the house, they will be required to fill out an application and provide a potential buyer's bank prequalification and "proof of funds."

"We want to keep the tourists away — the people who are not serious and just want to get inside the house," said O'Neill.

There is a two-car garage on the property, and the total annual property taxes are \$27,927, according to the Multiple Listing Service of Long Island website.

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Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh

An 'Earthquake' in Britain in 664

David Woods

Abstract. There is good reason to doubt the soundness of a record in the Irish annals of an earthquake in Britain in 664. It appears that a metaphorical reference to a disturbance in the church there, namely, the contentious synod of Whitby, has been interpreted literally and misunderstood by the compiler of the record that lies behind the extant annals.

Key words: Irish annals, 'Iona Chronicle', Bede, earthquakes, plague, eclipses, chronology, events of 664, synod of Whitby.

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The *Annals of Ulster* (AU) record the occurrence of a series of ominous events or natural disasters in 664, including an earthquake in Britain:

Tenebrę in kl. Maii in nona hora, ⁊ in eadem ęstate coelum ardere visum est. Mortalitas in Hiberniam peruenit in kl. Augusti. Bellum Lutho Feirn, .i. i Fortrinn. Mors Cernaigh filii Diarmato mc. Aedho Slane; et terremotus in Britannia; ⁊ Comgan moccu Teimhne, ⁊ Berach ab Benncair. Baetan moccu Cormaicc, abb Cluano, obiit. In Campo Itho Fothart exarsit mortalitas primo in Hibernia. A morte Patricii .cc^a iii., prima mortalitas .cxii. 'Darkness on the Kalends [1st] of May at the ninth hour, and in the same summer the sky seemed to be on fire. The plague reached Ireland on the Kalends [1st] of August. The battle of Luith Feirn i.e. in Fortriu. Death of Cernach son of Diarmait son of Aed Sláne; and an earthquake in Britain; and Comgán moccu Teimni and Berach, abbot of Bennchor, [rested]. Baetán moccu Cormaicc, abbot of Cluain, died. In Mag Ítha of Fothairt the plague first raged in Ireland. From the death of Patrick 203 [years, and from] the first mortality 112 [years]'.¹

The *Annals of Tigernach* (AT) and *Chronicon Scotorum* (CS) record the same catalogue of events, although the CS dates them to 660. Furthermore, CS locates the earthquake in Ireland rather than in Britain. However, the agreement of AU and AT suggests that they best preserve the original wording of their common ancestor in this matter, so that the so-called 'Iona Chronicle' had probably loca-

1. Text and translation from Seán Mac Airt & Gearóid Mac Niocaill (ed & tr), *The Annals of Ulster (to AD 1131)* (Dublin 1983) 134–37 (with minor changes).

ted this event in Britain.² One may also prefer this reading on the grounds that is the *lectio difficilior*, that is, that it is hard to understand why an Irish editor or copyist might have changed an original reference to Ireland to one to Britain, although it is easy to understand how the opposite might have occurred.

How reliable is the claim of the 'Iona Chronicle' that Britain experienced an earthquake in 664? There are two reasons to doubt its accuracy. First, it is immediately suspicious that Bede reveals no knowledge whatsoever of this earthquake. Writing c.731, he records the occurrence of both the eclipse and the plague in 664, but omits to mention the earthquake (HE iii 27):

Eodem autem anno dominicae incarnationis DCLX quarto, facta erat eclipsis solis die tertio mensis Maii, hora circiter decima diei; quo etiam anno subita pestilentiae lues depopulatis prius australibus Britanniae plagis, Nordanhymbrorum quoque provinciam corripens atque acerva clade diutius longe lateque desaeuens, magnam hominum multitudinem stravit 'In this year of our Lord 664 there was an eclipse of the sun on 3 May about 4 o'clock in the afternoon. In the same year a sudden pestilence first depopulated the southern parts of Britain and afterwards attacked the kingdom of Northumbria, raging far and wide with cruel devastation and laying low a vast number of people'.³

Shortly after this passage he refers to 664 as the year when plague had followed an eclipse (HE iv 1), but does not mention the earthquake here either. One notes that he did not refrain from describing the occurrence of an earthquake in an earlier part of his history, even though it had occurred long ago and far away, and it is not clear why he should have deliberately chosen to ignore a similar event in his own country at a much more recent date.⁴ Indeed, the association of the earthquake with an outbreak of plague in each case should have encouraged

2. Kathleen Hughes, *Early christian Ireland: introduction to the sources* (London 1972) 106. In his recent reconstruction of the 'Chronicle of Ireland', the continuation of the 'Iona chronicle' until 911, Thomas Charles-Edwards (*The chronicle of Ireland*, Translated Texts for Historians, 44 (Liverpool 2006) 154–55) omits the notice describing the earthquake in Britain, despite the fact that it meets all the criteria otherwise for inclusion in his reconstruction. No explanation is offered.

3. Text and translation from Bertram Colgrave & R. A. B. Mynors (ed & tr), *Bede's Ecclesiastical history of the English people* (Oxford 1969) 310–13.

4. Bede, HE i 13. Here he describes the earthquake which struck Constantinople in 447 and destroyed much of its walls, including 57 towers. Even if he does not actually use the word 'earthquake' (*terrae motus*), he can hardly have understood it as anything else. The ultimate source for this event was the Chronicle of Count Marcellinus, but Bede knew this text probably only through its citation in the 'Iona Chronicle'. See Brian Croke, *Count Marcellinus and his chronicle* (Oxford 2001) 240–49.

the specific mention of the earthquake also in 664, especially when such combinations of events were regarded as important indications that the end of the world was drawing near.⁵ Whatever the case, the fact that he differs from the surviving witnesses to the 'Iona Chronicle' as to both the time and date of the eclipse is important here in that it reveals that he was drawing on an independent, presumably local, source for his annalistic material in this instance.⁶ He was not merely drawing in a careless and partial way upon the 'Iona Chronicle', some version of which he undoubtedly possessed.⁷ So the fact that he, or rather his local source, reveals no knowledge of this earthquake must encourage the suspicion that it had never occurred in the first place.

The second reason to doubt the accuracy of the 'Iona Chronicle' when it claims that Britain had suffered an earthquake in 664, is that this notice stands isolated among its other notices on this topic. AU records nine earthquakes in addition to that of 664, as follows:

AU 448.1 *Ingenti terrę motu per loca uaria imminente plurimi Urbis Auguste muri recenti adhuc reedificatione constructi cum .l.iii. turribus conruerunt.*

AU 466.1 *Rauennam ciuitatem terremotus deterruit.*

AU 498.3 *Hoc anno ingens terremotus Ponticam concussit prouinciam.*

AU 601.1 *Terremotus i mBairchiu.*

AU 685.1 *Uentus magnus. Terremotus in Insola.*

AU 707.5 *Duo terrimotus septimana in eadem in mense Decimbri in aquilonali parte Hiberniae.*

AU 721.2 *Terrimotus in Octimbre.*

AU 730.1 *Terremotus .ui. Id Februarii, .iiii. feria.*

AU 740.3 *Terrimotus in Ili .ii. Id Aprilis.*

The compiler of the 'Iona Chronicle', or some later editor, copied the notices concerning the first three of these from the Chronicle of Marcellinus, but there

5. Lk 21:10. For contemporary attitudes, see the end of the letter by pope Gregory I to king Ethelbert in Bede, HE i 32.

6. The date apparently preserved by 'Iona Chronicle' is the correct one. Kenneth Harrison (*The framework of Anglo-Saxon history to AD 900* (Cambridge 1976) 94) explains the different dates on the basis that 'the English annalist may not have seen the eclipse for himself, since the belt of totality did not cover the whole country; and he might prefer the day of the new moon indicated by the Dionysiac table, 3 May, even if he had been assured that the event took place on the Kalends of May'.

7. John Morris, 'The Chronicle of Eusebius: Irish fragments', *Bull Inst Class Stud* 19 (1978) 80–93: 86; Daniel Mc Carthy, 'The chronology and sources of the early Irish annals', *Early Medieval Europe* 10 (2001) 323–41: 331–40.

is no reason to doubt that the rest came from native Irish sources and recorded events which occurred either in Ireland itself or in the Irish-controlled territory of western Scotland, including Iona. Three of the six notices explicitly record this fact. That the alleged earthquake of 664 in Britain is the only one so described, and does not occur as part of some larger sequence or series of notices recording earthquakes either 'in Britannia' or at more specific locations within Britain, raises the possibility that some error has occurred in the transmission of this notice, whether in the very identification of the event as an 'earthquake' or in its location. Such an error would not be without parallel within the earlier sections of the surviving Irish chronicles.⁸

So what sort of notice might have been wrongly read in reference to an earthquake when it did not in fact refer to such? An example from a Byzantine chronicle will illustrate the sort of processes that may have also occurred in an Irish context. Writing c.814, the chronicler Theophanes records two events for the year AM 5812 (=AD 319/20), the rise of the Arian heresy in Alexandria in Egypt, and the occurrence there also of an earthquake:

In this year in Alexandria, Arius (from whom the madness is named) disclosed his own heresy before the congregation and brought about a schism, with the collusion of the devil, who was unable to look upon the peace of the Church. A most violent earthquake shook Alexandria, with many houses collapsing and considerable loss of life.⁹

There are two problems with this alleged earthquake. The first is that none of the surviving sources for the fourth century mention it. It is particularly problematic that Eusebius of Caesarea does not seem to have mentioned it in his *Chronicle* which he concluded in 326, or so we may judge from the surviving witnesses to the same.¹⁰ The second is that Alexandria was very rarely affected by earthquakes. It was never an epicentre itself, and usually comes to our attention only as one of the many towns which suffered during the most severe and widespread earthquake episodes.¹¹ It has been argued, therefore, that Theophanes

8. cf. David Woods, 'On "ships in the air" in 749', *Peritia* 14 (2000) 429–30; idem, 'Acorns, the plague, and the "Iona Chronicle"', *Peritia* 17–18 (2003–04) 495–502.

9. Cyril Mango & Roger Scott (tr), *The chronicle of Theophanes Confessor: Byzantine and Near Eastern history AD 284–813* (Oxford 1997) 29.

10. Richard W. Burgess, *Studies in Eusebian and post-Eusebian chronography* (Stuttgart 1999) 60–65.

11. As in the great earthquake of 365. See Gavin Kelly, 'Ammianus and the great tsunami', *J Rom Stud* 94 (2004) 141–67. On its freedom from earthquakes, see, for example Pliny, *Natural*

invented this earthquake as a result of his misunderstanding of the metaphorical language used by his source to describe the way in which Arius had 'shaken' the church at Alexandria.¹² He seems to have interpreted this to mean that God had sent an earthquake in order to punish the people of Alexandria for their toleration of this heretic.

I suggest that a similar process underlies the notice in the Irish annals concerning the earthquake of 664. A metaphorical reference to a disturbance in the church in Britain has been interpreted quite literally and taken to refer to an earthquake.

The proof of this lies in the fact that church in Britain did indeed suffer a major change in 664. At the so-called synod of Whitby, king Oswiu of Northumbria decided to favour the Dionysiac Easter table as used in Rome over the traditional Irish 84-year Easter table.¹³ As a result, the community of Iona lost influence over the church there. So, from the point of view of a monk on Iona, the church in Britain, or Northumbria at least, was 'shaken' in 664 when bishop Colmán and all the other monks who refused to accept the Dionysiac Easter table either left or were expelled from Northumbria.¹⁴ It is my suggestion, therefore, that the first compiler of the 'Iona Chronicle' misunderstood one of his sources, probably a contemporary entry in the margin of an Easter table.¹⁵ This entry was brief to the point of obscurity, and in language vague enough to allow of several interpretations. The fact that it was read in reference to an earthquake (*terrae motus*) leads one to suspect that it may have contained some cognate of *motus*. Hence the original notice may have noted merely that there was a 'dispute' or 'disturbance' in Britain (*commotatio in Brittania*), or that the church in Britain was 'shaken' (*ecclesia mota est in Brittania*), so that anyone reading this notice at a later period may have been left at a loss to understand the exact nature of this disturbance or shaking.¹⁶ The fact that Bede reveals no knowledge

history, ii 195; Agathias, ii.15.1. In general, see Emanuela Guidoboni (ed), *Catalogue of ancient earthquakes in the Mediterranean area up to the 10th century* (Rome 1994).

12. Mango & Scott, *Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, 30, cite a paper by Martine Henry, 'Le premier scisme d'Egypte', still unpublished, a copy of which the author has kindly sent me.

13. Bede, HE iii 25.

14. Bede, HE iii 26. On the importance of the Easter controversy, see Thomas Charles-Edwards, *Early christian Ireland* (Cambridge 2000) 391–415.

15. Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, 'Early Irish annals from Easter tables: a case restated', *Peritia* 2 (1983) 74–86; repr. in Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, *Early Irish history and chronology* (Dublin 2003) 76–86.

16. On the uses of *commotatio*, see Jan Frederik Niermeyer, *Mediae Latinitatis lexicon minus* (Leiden 1997) 219. Late Antique notices of earthquakes tend to use some verb describing how the affected cities collapsed as the result of the earthquake, with explicit reference to the earthquake

of the earthquake in Britain in 664 proves that compiler of the 'Iona Chronicle' has misunderstood something in one of his sources, even if one does not accept the proposal offered here. The next question is why he mistakenly took his source to refer to an earthquake in particular. Britain suffers relatively little seismic activity by international standards, but minor earthquakes do occur on a regular basis, especially in the more active seismic regions, such as the western Highlands of Scotland.¹⁷ Ireland suffers far less seismic activity, indeed practically none.¹⁸ The key point here is that Iona is situated in one of the most active seismic regions in the whole of Britain, and the pattern of earthquake activity recorded by the Irish annals for the period 685–740 rings true. A similar pattern of earthquakes must have affected the region long before 685. The obvious conclusion, therefore, is that the community on Iona began to record these earthquakes in a systematic manner for the first time about 685, that is, that they developed about this time a document in which to record various noteworthy events as they occurred, a chronicle or set of annals. I suggest, therefore, that the compiler of the 'Iona Chronicle' was inclined to interpret the notice of a 'disturbance' in Britain in 664 as an earthquake because the earth tremor on Iona in 685 was still fresh in his mind. It has already been noted elsewhere that the Iona entries in the surviving Irish annals become much fuller from the 680s and that a series of precisely dated entries begins in 686. This, it has been argued, indicates that the 'Iona Chronicle' was only compiled from scattered earlier sources as a

itself also (for example, *terrae motu ruerunt/ conciderunt/ collapsae sunt*), but this was not always the case. For example, the *Historia augusta* describes how an earthquake shook Rome and Libya in 262 (*SHA Gall.* 5.2–6): *Mota est et Roma, mota Libia*. Although Jerome describes the destruction of Neocaesarea in Pontus in 343 without actually mentioning the cause (*Chron.* s.a. 343: *Neocaesaria in Ponto subversa excepta ecclesia et episcopo ceterisque, qui ibidem reperti sunt*), other sources confirm the occurrence of an earthquake. See David Woods, 'Gregory Thaumaturgus and the earthquake of 344', *J Theol Stud* 53 (2002) 547–53.

17. In general, see R. M. W. Musson, *A catalogue of British earthquakes*, British Geological Survey Technical Report WL/94/04 (Edinburgh 1994) esp. 6–7; also R. M. W. Musson & P. W. Winter, *Seismic hazard of the UK: a report produced for the Department of Trade and Industry*, (GNSR(DTI)/P/(96)196 (Edinburgh 1996). The latter includes a revised catalogue of British earthquakes. Strangely, neither catalogue includes the alleged earthquake under discussion here. Nor do they include the earthquakes which AU dates to 721, 730 and 740, and which probably refer to earthquakes on Iona. They both begin with an earthquake in 684 which seems identifiable as that recorded by the AU for Iona, but whose date should be corrected to 685. Finally, it is noteworthy that the northeast of England, where Bede wrote, is one of the least active seismic regions in Britain.

18. Musson, *Catalogue of British earthquakes*, 6: 'The whole of Ireland is practically free of earthquakes'.

text in its own right during the 680s.¹⁹ The present discovery reinforces this conclusion.

In summary, there was no earthquake in Britain in 664. The entries in the surviving Irish annals which appear to describe such all descend from a mistaken notice in the 'Iona Chronicle' whose compiler had misunderstood a notice describing the so-called synod of Whitby in 664 in reference to an earthquake. And that is why the 'Iona Chronicle' itself, or rather all the texts descended from it, seem to ignore this synod, despite its significance both for the history of christianity in Britain and, in particular, for the history of the community on Iona.

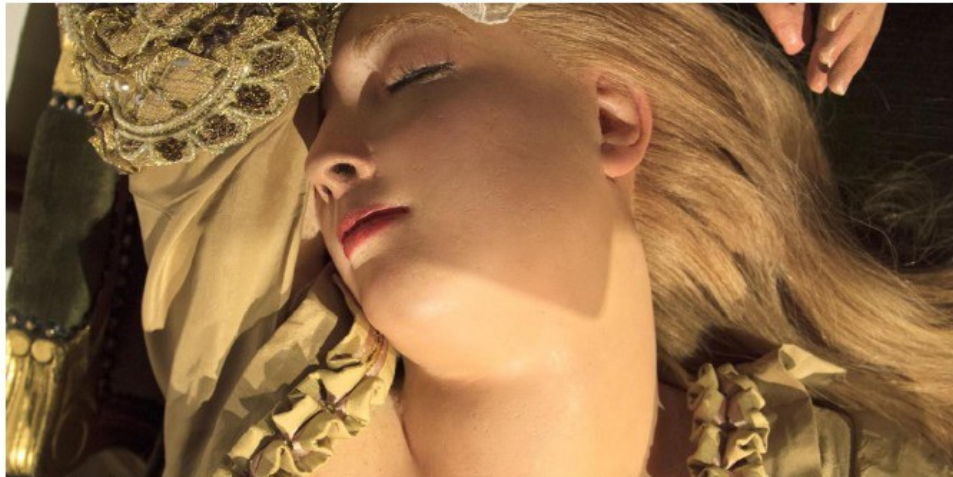
19. Hughes, *Early christian Ireland*, 118.

Why these anatomical models are not disgusting

bbc.com



• By Fiona



The Sleeping Beauty (Credit: Madame Tussauds Archives, London. Photo Joanna Ebenstein)

Macdonald

26 May 2016



Nightmares in wax (Credit: Josephinum, Collections and History of Medicine, MedUni Vienna/Photo Joanna Ebenstein)

Nightmares in wax

A tiny foetus, its foot kicking out of a womb; an intestine piled up next to a lifeless figure, her torso ripped open from the string of pearls on her neck to her abdomen. Our natural reaction is to recoil with disgust, to dismiss these eerie waxworks as freak show objects. Yet to do so is to misunderstand them, says the author of a new book. "They do say something different to us today from what they meant at the time," says Joanna Ebenstein, co-founder of the

Morbid Anatomy Museum in New York. Her book *The Anatomical Venus* reveals how a figure that provokes an uneasy reaction in viewers now was once a popular tool for instruction. This Anatomical Venus, produced by the workshop at La Specola in Florence between 1784 and 1788, is displayed in her original rosewood and Venetian glass case at the Josephinum, Vienna, Austria. (Credit: Josephinum, Collections and History of Medicine, MedUni Vienna/Photo Joanna Ebenstein)

Skin deep

Created between 1780 and 1782, the original anatomical Venus by Clemente Susini (pictured) can still be seen at La Specola – the public science museum founded by Leopold II in Florence. Also known as 'the Medici Venus', the life-size wax figure has real human hair, and can be dissected into seven anatomically correct layers. She spawned numerous copies, referred to as Slashed Beauties or Dissected Graces and also displayed in medical museums. "Supine in their glass boxes, they beckon with a gentle smile or an ecstatic downcast gaze," writes Ebenstein in *The Anatomical Venus*. "One idly toys with a plait of real golden human hair; another clutches at the plush, moth-eaten satin cushions of



© Museo di Storia Naturale Università di Firenze, Zoologica, 'La Specola', Italy/Photo Joanna Ebenstein

Skin deep (Credit: Museo di Storia Naturale Università di Firenze, Zoologica, 'La Specola', Italy/Photo Joanna Ebenstein)



© Université de Montpellier anatomical collection/Photo Marc Dantan/Courtesy of Thames & Hudson Ltd

Fairground attraction (Credit: Université de Montpellier anatomical collection/Photo Marc Dantan/Courtesy of Thames & Hudson Ltd)

her case as her torso erupts in a spontaneous, bloodless auto-dissection; another is crowned with a golden tiara, while one further wears a silk ribbon tied in a bow around a dangling entrail.” (Credit: Museo di Storia Naturale Università di Firenze, Zoologica, 'La Specola', Italy/Photo Joanna Ebenstein)

Fairground attraction

It's a world away from Madame Tussauds. No grinning faces to be photographed in selfies; no celebrity glamour or statesmanlike poses. These are waxworks that both intrigue and repulse: models that seem to hover somewhere between freak show and operating theatre. Ebenstein aims to place them in their cultural context, looking at the history of the anatomical Venus and finding out where it fits in the 21st Century. “Since their creation in late-18th-Century Florence, these wax women have seduced, intrigued, and instructed. In the 21st Century, they also confound, flickering on the edges of medicine and myth, votive and vernacular, fetish and

fine art,” she writes in her opening chapter. “How can we understand today an object that is at once a seductive representation of ideal female beauty and an explicit demonstration of the inner workings of the body? How can we make sense of an artefact that was once equally at home in the fairground and the medical museum?” This life-size 40-piece anatomical Venus is from Pierre Spitzner's 19th-Century collection. (Credit: Université de Montpellier anatomical collection/Photo Marc Dantan/Courtesy of Thames & Hudson Ltd)

Cultural curiosity

Ebenstein had to wrestle with her own feelings when she first encountered the Venus. “It's so confusing, and it has such power when you see it, it's hard not to be drawn in,” she tells BBC Culture. “I was trying to figure out how to make sense of it – it looks so bizarre to us now. Of all the forms an anatomical teaching tool could take, how come it was that one?” She overcame her initial reaction by reading about the Venus and looking at figures in different settings. “I went to other kinds of museums and churches to try and understand the context of the culture that created it, which made me start thinking about it in a very different way from most people in the medical museum world,” she says. “My background is intellectual history, so when I look at an object that looks strange to us today, my first thought is ‘Why? Did it look strange to people at the time? What does it say about us that it now looks strange?’” (Credit: Josephinum, Collections and History of Medicine, MedUni Vienna/Photo Joanna Ebenstein)



© Josephinum, Collections and History of Medicine, MedUni Vienna/Photo Joanna Ebenstein

Cultural curiosity (Credit: Credit: Josephinum, Collections and History of Medicine, MedUni Vienna/Photo Joanna Ebenstein)



© Museo di Palazzo Poggi, Università' di Bologna. Photo Joanna Ebenstein

Venus in pearls (Credit: Credit: Museo di Palazzo Poggi, Università' di Bologna. Photo Joanna Ebenstein)

Venus), is a 1782 life-size dissectible wax model created by the workshop of Clemente Susini at La Specola for Museo di Palazzo Poggi, Bologna, Italy. (Credit: Museo di Palazzo Poggi, Università' di Bologna. Photo Joanna Ebenstein)

Venus in pearls

Ebenstein realised that the Venus was not an oddity: it was truly a product of its time. Leopold II founded La Specola after becoming the Grand Duke of Tuscany in 1765; he aimed to educate Florentines in the empirical observation of natural laws and challenge the more irrational practices of the Roman Catholic church. His new museum, Ebenstein argues, “would make available to the general public the rare and valuable cultural artefacts previously secreted in the Medici Wunderkammern, or cabinets of wonder”. In a period when the study of the natural world included what we know today as science, aesthetics and metaphysics, she claims, “the Medici Venus was a perfect embodiment of the Enlightenment values of her time, in which human anatomy was understood as a reflection of the world and the pinnacle of divine knowledge, and in which to know the human body was to know the mind of God.” Venerina (Little



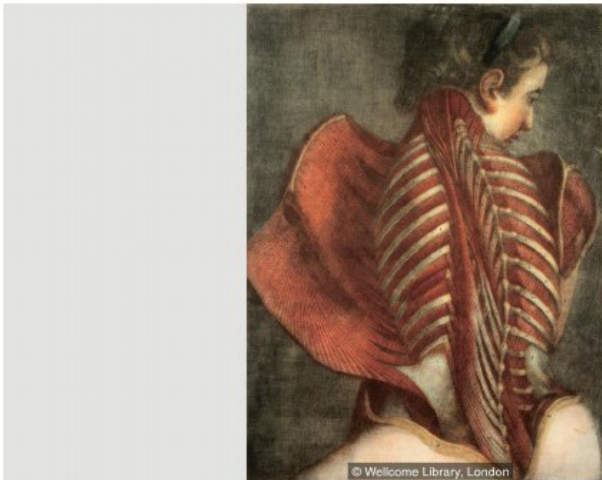
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Dissecting beauty (Credit: Credit: Josephinum, Collections and History of Medicine, MedUni Vienna/Photo Joanna Ebenstein)

Dissecting beauty

In a bid to depict humans in a more realistic way, visual artists of the Renaissance carried out their own dissections – more even than anatomists of the era. According to Ebenstein, Leonardo da Vinci “is said to have dissected more than 100 bodies, and famously ‘sketched cadavers he had dissected with his own hand’”. One key anatomical text of 1543, *De Humani Corporis Fabrica* (On the Fabric of the Human Body), was illustrated with woodcuts “thought

to be by Titian's studio in Venice". That overlap of disciplines was the background for the anatomical Venus. "One of the things that makes the Venus so hard for us to understand is that we've now divided up all those things in ways that wasn't divided in the time that it was made," Ebenstein tells BBC Culture. "We have this division between art and science, and between religion and medicine, that didn't exist at that time." (Credit: Josephinum, Collections and History of Medicine, MedUni Vienna/Photo Joanna Ebenstein)



One foot in the grave (Credit: Credit: Wellcome Library, London)

One foot in the grave

The creators of the 'Slashed Beauties' aimed to bring anatomy out of the graveyard. "Most of anatomical knowledge was derived from dead bodies, and that's not appropriate for a popular audience," says Ebenstein. "So how do you create an object that can take something from the grave and the cadavers it took to make it, but make people forget that, or not know it, and make them seduced by it? A lot of her beauty

has to do with that, it's essential to making her a popular object." There is a quote in the book from the 18th Century anatomical illustrator Arnaud-Éloi Gautier D'Agoty: "For men to be instructed, they must be seduced by aesthetics, but how can anyone render the image of death agreeable?" The waxworks harnessed aesthetics to reach a larger audience. "The popular part is really important, and I think that part really baffles people," says Ebenstein. "They assume the Venus was made for doctors – but it wasn't, and in that way it wasn't made for an audience of men the way some feminists expect it to be – it was made for men, women and children, that's really essential to understanding it." This 1746 mezzotint of a fashionably coiffed anatomised woman, L'Ange Anatomique (The Flayed Angel), was created by Arnaud-Éloi's father Jacques-Fabien Gautier d'Agoty. (Credit: Wellcome Library, London)



Sleeping beauty (Credit: Credit: Madame Tussauds Archives, London. Photo Joanna Ebenstein)

Sleeping beauty

However uncanny they might seem to us, the wax figures were primarily teaching tools. According to Ebenstein, "Each pristine wax model at the museum was the product of the careful study of cadavers that were delivered from the nearby Santa Maria Nuova hospital." They remain close to life. "Over 200 years after their creation, La Specola's waxworks are still considered remarkably accurate, some of them demonstrating anatomical structures that had

yet to be named or described at the time of their making." Yet in making them more attractive than a cadaver, the waxwork sculptors were also creating art works. As Ebenstein argues, the anatomical Venus evoked "a long history of paintings and sculptures of placid, idealised nudes". And that's where the human detail that unnerves us came in. "She is designed to charm in every detail: her glistening

glass eyes are rimmed with real eye-lashes, her bared throat is bound by a string of pearls, and she boasts a lustrous cascade of human hair." This figure is known as 'the Sleeping Beauty': a 1925 replica of the original piece from 1767, it's a breathing wax model by Swiss physician and master wax sculptor Philippe Curtius. (Credit: Madame Tussauds Archives, London. Photo Joanna Ebenstein)

The anatomy and the ecstasy

Yet for Ebenstein, the anatomical Venus was not a figure that had been sexualised. "Some feminists have a kneejerk response to looking at this – I would argue that any fetish element didn't exist at the time." Instead, she argues, the figures tapped into a tradition of religious sculpture. "Susini, who made the most famous of the Venuses, also made waxes of a dying Christ that were beautiful." When we interpret the Venus in this way, she believes, we're revealing our own cultural biases. "That expression on her face that we read as erotic today, I do not believe it was seen that way at the time – because otherwise it wouldn't be on every saint in the church," she says. "Something has changed in us; we can't see anything without reading a prurient intent into it. I really don't believe that's how they were understood at the time." In the book, Ebenstein picks out a sculpture of Gian Lorenzo Bernini's life-sized white marble masterpiece, the Ecstasy of Saint Teresa (1647–52) at Santa Maria della Vittoria in Rome (pictured). "It is likely that a different understanding of the ecstatic than our own influenced Venus's reception," she writes. "The ecstatic was understood at that time not merely as a profane, sensual experience, but as an expression of the sacred: a mystical experience." (Credit: Alamy)



© Josephinum, Collections and History of Medicine, MedUni Vienna/Photo Joanna Ebenstein
A question of faith (Credit: Josephinum, Collections and History of Medicine, MedUni Vienna/Photo Joanna Ebenstein)

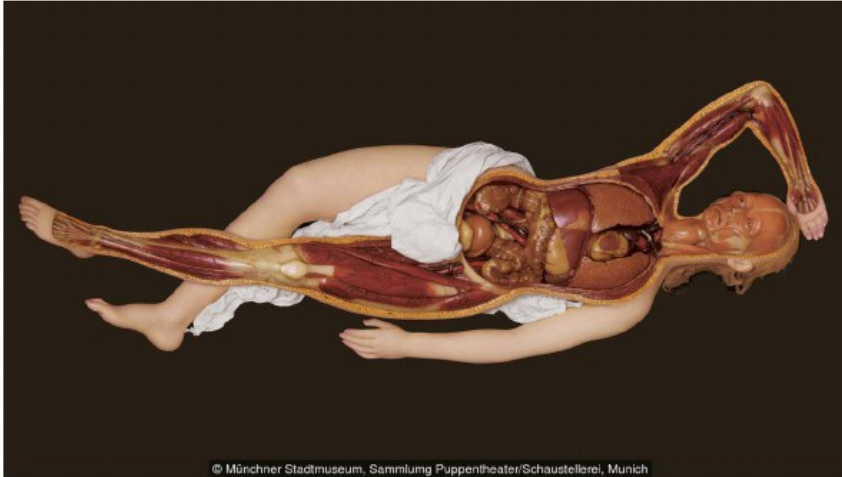
A question of faith

"What it draws on, the language it draws on, is so much broader than you would think, and that helps to make sense of it," claims Ebenstein. Attempting to unpick specific influences can be a thankless task. "There are all these strange overlaps between Catholicism and medicine, in this desire to preserve and effigise the body. Because the body has all of this meaning: in medicine, it has meaning because it tells us about the world, and in religion it has meaning because it's a

healing tool. It's a very complicated terrain which is difficult to untangle." The Venus appears at a time when the two are beginning to unspool. "You have these two different philosophies, science and medicine versus religion, that are attempting to tell us the answers about where we fit in the universe, what life is for, what consciousness is, what the body is, and how we deal with death and disease. Venus is a moment when it's in both hands: the torch is being passed from one to the other." (Credit: Josephinum, Collections and History of Medicine, MedUni Vienna/Photo Joanna Ebenstein)

Hidden beliefs

Yet it was to be a long time before the torch had been passed. "I think this particular way of looking at the world lingered on longer than we think, and you can see that by looking at old medical atlases," says Ebenstein. "Up until the early 19th Century, you still see memento mori imagery in books that were ostensibly about bones, or childbirth. To me, that suggests these ideas are still in circulation – whether scientists believed them, or felt they had to include them just because it's the way people need it explained in order to understand, I don't know." At that time, she argues, medical imagery as we now understand it was not just a diagrammatic understanding. "It was also about man's place in nature, about the nature of life and death, and about God. I feel that this idea we have now about 'proper' anatomical



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 Hidden beliefs (Credit: Credit: Münchner Stadtmuseum, Sammlung Puppentheater/Schaustellerei, Munich)

imagery, which should be devoid of extraneous detail, it shouldn't have beautiful hair or a beautiful face – it should be as neutral and diagrammatic as possible – didn't really come into being until Gray's Anatomy in 1858. That changed how we start thinking about the correct ways to depict the dead body – it shifted in a big way." Our own 'objective' scientific viewpoint remains as filtered as the beliefs of the 18th-Century Florentines. "I think we're still within that world. That's now our style, and it looks invisible to us, but I expect in 100

years' time people will look at it and think that it says something culturally about who we are now." This dissectable Venus was created by the workshop of Rudolph Pohl, Dresden, Germany, circa 1930. (Credit: Münchner Stadtmuseum, Sammlung Puppentheater/Schaustellerei, Munich)



© Université de Montpellier anatomical collection/Photo Marc Dantan/Courtesy of Thames & Hudson Ltd
 Bodily function (Credit: Credit: Université de Montpellier anatomical collection/Photo Marc Dantan/Courtesy of Thames & Hudson Ltd)

Bodily function

By overcoming our initial reactions to figures like the Spitzner Anatomical Venus (shown here in a different stage of dissection), Ebenstein believes we can learn more about our own hidden cultural beliefs. "The Venus has many interpretations – some people find her deeply offensive or horrible – but there are ways to have a more nuanced understanding. I would be pleased if people came away saying 'oh I thought this was disgusting, but now I understand

that my feeling of disgust is more about who we are today than about the intention of the makers at the time." And the Venus embodies an approach that Ebenstein thinks we could benefit from now: "a multi-disciplinary attitude, in which aesthetics and artistic expression and truth in a scientific way could all work together to draw in and engage an audience, and make them want to learn". Because, as she says, "we all have bodies, and we all think about them and we're all afraid of them and intrigued by them". (Credit: Université de Montpellier anatomical collection/Photo Marc Dantan/Courtesy of Thames & Hudson Ltd)

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Elizabeth Valad and Brigitte MacClennanmurderpedia.org

Anthony John HARDY



Arrest and trial

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Police have been reported to believe that Hardy was likely to be connected to the unsolved cases of two prostitutes found dismembered and dumped in the Thames, and up to five or six other area murders that bore marked similarities to the ones for which he was convicted, but there is not enough evidence available directly implicating him in the murders for further action.

In May 2010, a High Court judge decided that Hardy should never be released from prison, placing him on the list of Whole life tariff prisoners.

Mr Justice Keith, sitting in London, said: "This is one of those exceptionally rare cases in which life should mean life."

In popular culture

After Hardy was imprisoned controversial British rap artist Plan B released a song about Hardy, dubbing him the 'Camden Ripper'. The song describes how Hardy had psychiatric problems and was able to carry out the murders because of "neighbours who were always out raving". Hardy is also mentioned, and his flat pointed out, in the music video "Guided tour of Camden" by Charlie Sloth. The song talks about a fictional fifth victim, Suzanne Smith. Hardy was the subject of a Channel 4 documentary, "The Hunt for the Camden Ripper", broadcast in 2004. It was narrated by Juliet Stevenson and directed by Olly Lambert.

Wikipedia.org

Man given life for triple murder

BBC News

Tuesday, 25 November, 2003

A man has been jailed for life for killing three women to satisfy his "depraved and perverted" sexual cravings.

Anthony Hardy - who had been released from a psychiatric hospital after doctors thought he would be no danger to the public - dismembered two women and left their body parts in a bin near his north London home.

Months earlier another woman had been found dead in his flat - but her death had initially been put down to natural causes.

Hardy, 53, of Camden, pleaded guilty at the Old Bailey to murdering Sally White, Elizabeth Valad and Bridgette MacClennan.

In sentencing him, judge Mr Justice Keith said: "Only you know for sure how your victims met their deaths but the unspeakable indignities to which you subjected the bodies of your last two victims in order to satisfy your depraved and perverted needs are in no doubt."

Parts of the dismembered remains of Miss MacClennan, 34, and Miss Valad, 29, who both lived in London, were found in bin bags in the early hours of 30 December 2002.

The body of Miss White, 31, who also lived in London, was found in his flat in January last year.

And the Metropolitan Police also revealed that Hardy had been investigated for three rapes, but there was insufficient evidence to bring a case against him.

Richard Horwell, prosecuting, said a tramp scavenging for food in a pub bin on 30 December last year made a "gruesome discovery".

Mr Horwell said the three prostitutes died in Hardy's home.

"We do not profess to have every piece of this disturbing jigsaw, but the defendant had an obsession with pornography and liked to dominate women," Mr Horwell said.

"A motive for the murders we suggest is that he decided to kill these women in order to photograph them in various positions which he had arranged when were dead."

He said Hardy had been in the process of preparing Miss White to be photographed when he was disturbed in January by police who found her naked body when investigating a dispute Hardy had with a neighbour.

He was arrested for murder but a post mortem examination found she had died from a heart attack and he was released.

He later spent time at St Luke's Hospital in Muswell Hill, north London, in relation to the dispute with the neighbour but was released in November.

A month later his second and third victims were killed.

Mr Horwell said all three victims were crack addicts and were financing the habit through prostitution.

After the discovery of the body parts by the tramp, Hardy's flat was searched and the torso of Ms Valad was found.

Post mortem tests found she had been strangled.

She was later identified through DNA as there was no head or hands.

Malcolm Swift QC, defending, said earlier that Hardy - who had originally denied the murders - "accepts he used excessive force in the course of otherwise consensual but extreme sexual activity but maintains he did not have an intention to kill."

Detective Chief Inspector Ken Bell said outside court: "Hardy is manipulative and evil. He is highly dangerous to women."

Mr Bell said he was satisfied with the initial investigation into the death of Ms White.

He said: "Without doubt Sally White died of a heart attack. What the investigation could never have known at the time was the background of Hardy in relation to his obsession with prostitutes and his sexual activities.

"Evidence from the murders committed a year on led me to examine the case of Sally White and to go back to the Home Office pathologist and ask him to reassess his findings."

Anthony John Hardy: The Camden Ripper

By Rachael Bell="font-size:>

River of Blood

On December 17, 2000, a man walking along the River Thames in West London noticed something unusual floating in the water. As he drew near, he realized that the object was the upper body of a woman. The rest of her body had been severed at the waist.

Police were immediately called to the scene near Church Road in Battersea and the woman's remains were drawn from the river. Medical examiners later speculated that she had been in the water for a couple weeks and had likely been cut by a sharp instrument such as a sword.

According to a December 29, 2000, BBC News article, the woman had two distinct characteristics, a tattoo and a twisted lateral incisor tooth that the police hoped would help identify her.

It didn't take long for the relatives of the victim to come forth after seeing pictures of the tattoo in the local newspapers. The young woman was identified as Zoe Louise Parker, 24, who worked as a prostitute in the Feltham and Hounslow area. In a January 5, 2001, BBC News article, her mother described her as "a loving, caring daughter" who suffered from learning disabilities. The family was devastated by the loss and appealed for any information concerning their daughter or her murder.

Police hoped to find the killer before he struck again. However, they had no strong leads in the case and no suspects. Less than two months later another horrific crime shocked the community.

In late February of that year, three 10-year-old boys fishing in the Regent's Canal at Camden retrieved a bag from the murky water. Upon opening it, the boys were mortified to find human body parts. Police were contacted and a search of the area immediately commenced.

During a sweep of the canal, investigators found approximately six bags, which contained various body parts wrapped in bin liners. Bricks had been used to weigh down the bags. Not all of the woman's body was accounted for. According to a March 2001 *Birmingham Evening Mail* article, the authorities suggested that the rest of her body was either still in the canal wrapped in bags or being kept by the killer as a trophy.

The woman was later identified as Paula Fields, 31, of Liverpool, who had lived in the Highbury Grove

area for a couple years before her death. She was a mother of two who worked as a prostitute to support her 150 a day crack cocaine habit. Paula was last seen getting into a red car on December 13. The authorities speculated that a hacksaw was likely used to dismember her body.

Initially, Paula's ex-boyfriend, who had a violent criminal history, was suspected of the gruesome murder. However, there was no evidence indicating that he was involved in the crime. Police eventually let the man go and began the search anew for a suspect.

In December 2002, a series of equally horrific crimes occurred in the Camden area. Even though police initially denied any link between the new victims and Zoe and Paula's murders, it was later speculated that the same person might have been involved.

The similarities between the cases were just too much to ignore. By January 2003, the police had a new suspect in custody, Anthony Hardy, 51, an unemployed mechanical engineer. His gruesome activities later earned him the nickname "the Camden Ripper."

Anthony Hardy

According to a November 2003 article in *The Daily Mail*, Anthony John Hardy was born in 1951 in Burton-on-Trent, Staffordshire and was the son of a coal miner. From an early age Hardy yearned to escape the lower middle-class lifestyle in which he was raised. He worked hard in school and excelled academically. Ultimately, he was accepted at London's Imperial College to study engineering.

During the mid-1970s, Hardy met and married Judith Dwight, with whom he attended university. The couple moved to Tasmania, Australia, where they raised their two boys and two girls. However, Justin Davenport and Hugh Dougherty reported in a November 2003 article in *The Evening Standard* that "from as early as 1982 Hardy displayed symptoms of mental illness."

The Daily Mail article claimed that during that year, Hardy tried to kill Judith by bludgeoning her over the head with a water bottle, "before trying to drown her in the bath." No charges were filed against Hardy and he checked himself into a psychiatric clinic in Queensland following the incident. He remained there for several weeks before returning back to Britain.

The couple filed for divorce in 1986. Judith maintained custody of the children and like Hardy, moved back to Britain to begin a new life. Shortly after returning to his home country, Hardy began stalking Judith, which led to her filing a restraining order against him. Davenport and Dougherty claimed that he broke the restriction order and as a result he was temporarily imprisoned.

Following his release, Hardy sought psychiatric help at outpatient clinics. According to Jeanette Oldham's January 2003 article in *The Scotsman*, he was diagnosed with, "peripheral neuropathy," a disorder which is known to cause depression. He was also diagnosed with manic depression and prescribed medication to reduce symptoms.

In the early- and mid-1990s, Hardy was homeless and spent much of his time living in various hostels throughout the city. During that time, Hardy began abusing drugs and alcohol, which further exacerbated his psychological problems. He got into trouble with the law on several more occasions for aggressive behavior and theft for which he served a short stint in jail.

Davenport and Dougherty reported that in 1998 Hardy was arrested for "indecent assault after a prostitute claimed he had raped her" but the charges were later dropped and he was released. A January 2003 BBC News article reported that he was also investigated for three other rapes, yet, "there was insufficient evidence to bring a case against him." However, he was ordered to seek psychiatric counseling, which he took advantage of at a local hospital. He was eventually discharged and referred to out patient care.

In 2000, Hardy moved into a one-bedroom public housing flat on Royal College Street in Camden. Oldham suggested that his new residence was located a short distance from King's Cross, an area where prostitutes frequented. It was a location that Hardy deliberately chose for that very reason. The neighborhood would become his hunting grounds.

In January 2002, Hardy caught the attention of police once again when he was caught pouring battery acid into a neighbor's mailbox. At around the same time a concerned neighbor told police that they believed something was amiss at Hardy's flat. The tip led to a gruesome discovery.

When police arrived at Hardy's residence, they found the bedroom door locked. When they broke it open they found the corpse of a young woman lying naked on his bed. *The Daily Mail* reported that there was evidence the woman suffered from "cuts to her head, bite marks and bruising," indicating that she might have been murdered. However, pathologists claimed that she died of a heart attack and not foul play.

The woman was later identified as Sally Rose White, 38, a prostitute from the Kings Cross area, who was known to have an addiction to crack cocaine. *The Daily Mail* suggested that Sally suffered from brain damage and behavioral problems caused by a birth-related spinal cord injury. It was believed that her condition, which worsened with age and lack of treatment, coupled with her addiction to drugs resulted in her heart attack. However, her death from "natural causes" would later be questioned when the remains of other women were discovered in Hardy's flat.

The Bin Murders

On December 30, 2002, a homeless man foraging in garbage bins for food came across a horrible discovery. Within one of the bags he found human remains, including severed sections of two legs. The homeless man took the remains with him to a nearby hospital where the police were contacted.

Upon their arrival at the crime scene, investigators immediately cordoned off the area around the bins, which was located behind a pub on Royal College Street. Officers searched the garbage container and found approximately eight more bags containing various body parts. According to a December 2002 BBC News article, the torso of a young woman was also found "in a wheelie bin about 100 yards from the original discovery."

The body parts were taken to St. Pancras mortuary to be examined by pathologists. The cause of death was difficult to establish because the heads and hands of the victims were still missing. Yet, pathologists were able to determine that the remains were that of two different women, who were likely murdered sometime over the Christmas holidays. DNA tests were conducted in the hopes that it would help investigators uncover the identity of the women.

The Daily Mail suggested that a "trail of blood" led the police to Hardy's flat located a short distance from where the bodies were discovered. They promptly obtained a warrant and searched his ground floor apartment, where they found a great deal of incriminating evidence. At the time of the search Hardy was nowhere to be found.

A November 2003 article by Jeff Edwards and Don Mackay in *The Mirror*, reported that investigators discovered in Hardy's flat a "hacksaw with human skin still attached to the blade." Moreover, an electric jigsaw power tool was found, pornographic magazines were scattered about, a woman's black stiletto shoe rested on the windowsill, blood was found in the bathroom and a devil's mask lay alongside a note on a table reading "Sally White RIP." However, one of the most incriminating pieces of evidence found at his apartment was a woman's torso wrapped in bin liners.

Following the gruesome discovery, a massive search was launched to find Hardy who had gone missing for several days. It was suspected that he fled town. However, a CCTV video surveillance camera caught him on tape on January 1 trying to fill a prescription for his diabetic medication at a London hospital. A

January 2003 BBC News article claimed that Hardy shaved off his beard in an attempt to alter his appearance.

During an interview with hospital staff, officers learned that Hardy spent four hours awaiting his medication. It was speculated that he had been drinking because he smelled of alcohol. According to Oldham, Hardy became "panicky" and left the hospital without receiving any medication after staff tried to convince him to go to a hostel.

The BBC News article reported that a member of the public had seen Hardy with a young woman named Kelly Anne Nicol, 24, shortly after the Christmas holidays. Family members and police were concerned for her safety, fearing that she might be Hardy's next victim.

However, their fears were alleviated when she contacted her parents to let them know she was okay. Even though she had contact with Hardy who repeatedly tried to persuade her back to his apartment, she did not allow herself to be influenced by him. It was a move that surely saved her life.

On January 2, a local citizen contacted police after spotting Hardy at Great Ormond Street Hospital for children in central London. Police converged on the scene a short while later and found Hardy in the area where he was last witnessed. He was promptly arrested and held at a local police station. It was there that he would reveal the full extent of his crimes.

Not long after Hardy was apprehended, investigators were able to obtain the identification of two of the victims whose remains were discovered at his home and in the trash bin. They were identified as Elizabeth Selina Valad, 29, of London and Brigitte MacClennan, 34, of Camden. The two women were found to have a lot in common.

Bob Graham suggested in a September 2003 article in *The Scotsman*, that Elizabeth was a rebellious woman who "lived a wayward life" from as early as her teens. Born in Nottingham, England, in 1972, Elizabeth was the only child of Iranian professor Hassan Valad and his British wife Jackie. The couple lived a short while in America. Yet, the marriage broke up when Jackie decided to return with Elizabeth back to Nottingham. At the time, Elizabeth was about one year old.

Jackie was quoted in Graham's article saying that her daughter was "a very difficult child" who "mixed with the wrong people" as a teenager. She further stated that Elizabeth dropped out of school and moved to London by herself at age 16. From that point there was little contact between the two.

The Daily Mail reported that at age 18, Elizabeth began a relationship with a man with whom she lived with in London. Shortly into the relationship, Elizabeth became pregnant and later gave birth to her little girl. The three lived with one another for a brief period before Elizabeth left her newly formed family in search of a different lifestyle.

It was further reported in *The Daily Mail* that Elizabeth worked in a massage parlor where she became involved with a married millionaire, who set her up in an expensive apartment and provided her with luxurious gifts. After some time, she moved out and started to date other people. The article stated that she "began to take crack cocaine and went back to prostitution to fund her lifestyle." Her addiction eventually led to her death. Hardy was thought to have played upon his victim's vulnerabilities by luring them to his flat with the promise of money or drugs.

It was Elizabeth's torso that was found at Hardy's residence and her legs that were discovered by the homeless person in the bin. It was difficult for investigators to identify her initially because her hands and head were never found. However, they were able to obtain a positive ID on her by processing the serial numbers found on her breast implants.

Brigitte MacClennan's identity was revealed on January 6, during a brief hearing at a Hendon court

where Hardy was charged with the murders. Brigitte, whose torso and other body parts were found in garbage bins, was identified through her DNA. Like Elizabeth, her head and hands were never found.

According to a Tahira Yaqoob and Michael Seemark's January 2003 article in *The Daily Mail*, Brigitte, a native New Zealander and mother of two boys, worked as a prostitute in Camden. The money she earned from selling her body was mostly used to finance her crack cocaine addiction. Hardy was believed to have been one of her customers, which is how she ended up in his flat. The article suggested that Brigitte was murdered "on or before December 30, 2002," at around the same time Elizabeth was killed.

The murders of Elizabeth and Brigitte led to a reinvestigation into Sally White's death of alleged "natural causes." It was believed that Hardy might have actually murdered her and simply got away with it when the pathologist incorrectly diagnosed her cause of death as a heart attack. They just had to prove their theory. However, after a brief inquest it was determined that Sally had indeed died of natural causes related to chronic heart disease. The findings would later be disproved following surprising new evidence brought forth by Hardy.

Trials and Confessions

Hardy's murder trial began at The Old Bailey Courthouse in November 2003. During the onset of the trial, he made a startling confession. He not only pled guilty to the murders of Elizabeth and Brigitte but also that of Sally White, who was thought to have died of natural causes. He had previously denied murdering the women.

A November 2003 article by Hugh Dougherty and Finian Davern in *The Evening Standard*, suggested that the confession discounted the conclusions of previous pathological reports into Sally's death and threw into question the credibility of the medical examiners that worked on her case.

During the trial it was revealed how each woman succumbed to their gruesome demise. Hardy was said to have lured all of the women to his apartment with the offer of money. He then engaged in extreme sex with the women before strangling them.

Davenport and Dougherty suggested that Hardy was a "pornography-obsessed necrophiliac" who achieved sexual gratification by posing the nude bodies of his victims after death and taking "explicit photos of their naked corpses."

In fact, it was suggested in a November 2003 BBC News article that his primary motivation for committing the murders was so that he could photograph them. It was also suggested that at the time police found Sally White, Hardy was likely "in the process of preparing her body for photographs. She too would have likely ended up in the trash bin had the police not interrupted his gruesome activities.

According to Edwards and Mackay, Hardy had taken about 44 pornographic pictures of Elizabeth and Brigitte, which he allegedly sent to a friend. The pictures were later turned into the police. They claimed that one of the macabre photographs depicted Elizabeth lying posed on the bed with her facial features obscured by a devil mask and a baseball hat, both of which were later found at Hardy's flat during the search.

After Hardy had finished with his victims, he used a hacksaw to dismember their bodies in his bathtub. Evidence of his victims' blood was found in his bathroom. Oldham reported that when the police interviewed neighbors after the discovery of the bodies, they claimed to have heard drilling sounds "at all hours of the day."

BBC News reported that the judge overhearing the case, Justice Keith, said to Hardy at the conclusion of the trial, "Only you know for sure how your victims met their deaths but the unspeakable indignities to

which you subjected the bodies of your last two victims in order to satisfy your depraved and perverted needs are in no doubt."

On November 25, 2003 Hardy was given three life sentences for the murders. An article in *The Guardian Unlimited* said that the judge would later decide whether he could ever be released on license.

Failure of the System

In January 2002, following the discovery of Sally White's body and Hardy's arrest for having poured acid into a neighbor's mailbox, he was detained in the mental ward at St. Luke's Hospital in Muswell to undergo a psychological evaluation. *The Daily Mail* reported that while Hardy was being evaluated, he made sport of conning psychiatrists. The article quoted a friend of his who said that Hardy believed he was "cleverer than they were." However, mental health experts saw through him.

Despite Hardy's efforts to fool them, psychiatrists found Hardy to be a risk to the community, especially women. Edwards and Mackay quoted Dr. Alan Stuart-Reid, who warned that, "His behavior is characterized by impulsiveness, lack of forethought about the consequences of his actions, seriously irresponsible behavior, inability to learn from experience and lack of concern for others' feelings." Moreover, Stuart-Reid also said that there was a strong chance that if he were reintegrated back into society he would likely re-offend and "cause others serious physical or psychological harm."

Despite repeated warnings from health care professionals, Hardy was released in November of that year. A panel, made up of three health managers made the decision after having found Hardy of little threat to society. Davenport and Dougherty said that their decision was allegedly based on reports by psychiatrists that he was of "low to medium risk."

However, Deborah Orr suggested in her November 2003 article in *The Independent* that the panel actually failed to read the report put forth by psychiatrists that warned against Hardy's potentially violent behavior. It turned out to be a fatal error.

Martin Bright and Jo Revill reported in their January 2003 article in *The Observer* that a spokeswoman for the Camden and Islington Mental Health Trust "confirmed that Hardy was under supervision throughout Christmas and even kept an appointment with his supervisory group outside the hospital on December 30, the day the vagrant first discovered the body parts behind a pub in Camden Town." Yet, even though he was under supervision it was extremely limited.

According to *The Daily Mail*, health supervisors were actually "so scared of him they refused to go to his council flat, agreeing to meet him only in cafes." Their fears should have been enough to raise the alarm bells about his behavior but nothing was done about it and Hardy remained free to roam the streets.

Following Hardy's arrest, a public inquiry was held to determine why he was released when he was such an obvious threat to society. Orr claimed that there was increasing pressure to dismiss the panel of three health managers from their duties.

However, some argued that the panel should not have been faulted for falling victim to Hardy's manipulative psychotic behavior and that the blame rests solely on the offender. Regardless, the fact remains that had Hardy been kept in the hospital, Elizabeth and Brigitte would likely be alive today.

CrimeLibrary.com="font-size:>

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Archaeology of the Undead

Spencer Kornhaber

theatlantic.com

The many precautions people have taken to keep corpses in their graves



- James Close
- May 18, 2016

Twenty-seven thousand years ago, in a stone-age village fenced in by mammoth bones, three young people were buried together, their bodies covered by burnt spruce logs and branches. A woman, disfigured perhaps by some congenital abnormality, was placed in the middle. To her left, a man was laid prone, his face in the dirt. To

her right, another man had his hands angled awkwardly onto her groin, where red ochre, a pigment with ceremonial significance, was sprinkled. A thick wooden pole was driven through this man's own groin and thigh, pinning him to the ground.

For archaeologists, including the researchers who exhumed this trio in the 1980s at Dolní Věstonice, a prominent excavation site in the Czech Republic, such burials are like prehistoric murder-mystery puzzles. The trio's internment is one of the oldest examples of a "deviant burial"—a term in archaeology for graves that are atypical, unexpected, or just downright weird. Is the prone man's position a mark of disrespect? Did the woman's disfigurement change the way she was treated? And is the other man's "staking" evidence (as some have suggested) of an ancient fear of the "dangerous dead"—the belief that corpses would rise from their graves to cause mayhem?

Historically, archaeology hasn't paid much attention to deviant burials, which tend to involve peasants and criminals and are often discovered in excavations where time and resources are limited, precluding detailed analysis. But over the last few years, thanks to a broadening focus beyond the lavish mortuary practices of the elite, the field has begun to take a much keener interest. Researchers have been systematically collating the phenomenon, revealing that these deviant burials weren't just some fringe practice, but surprisingly widespread across cultures. A whole array of gruesome techniques now have been reported, all with the apparent intention of keeping the dead firmly in their graves.

In Eastern Europe, for instance—where Bram Stoker drew inspiration for *Dracula*—there have been numerous discoveries of corpses that have been "staked." Bulgaria has had multiple cases of 700-year-old skeletons with ploughshares—the hefty blade of a plough—thrust through them into the ground. Recent Polish excavations unearthed skeletons with sickles placed around their waists or the necks. Other techniques—such as "stoning" (weighing the corpse down with heavy objects)—have been found all over the world, from



The remains of the "vampire of Venice" who was buried with a brick in her mouth, in order to allegedly prevent her from consuming plague victims. (Ho New / Reuters)

4,000-year-old Bronze Age burials pinned down with huge rocks, to graves from Ancient Greece weighted down with amphora fragments, to medieval English skeletons buried under grinding stones. The approach of ramming something firmly in a corpse's open jaw has been observed both in 8th-century Irish "zombie burials" and the grave of the "Vampire of Venice," a 16th-century skeleton disinterred from a plague cemetery with a large sized brick wedged between the teeth.

"Burying people face down means they will only dig themselves deeper if they re-animate."

Abundant media coverage has followed these discoveries, which has fueled public fascination, but often frustrated archaeologists, because many of the stories are based on unpublished findings that have yet to be thoroughly scrutinized. When further Polish excavations found decapitated skeletons with skulls placed neatly between the feet, for instance, tabloids screamed "vampire burials." But the local Polish press pointed out that there were medieval gallows nearby, which suggested that the bodies simply were executed prisoners. Some scientists worry that media biases could be influencing archaeology itself. Simona Minozzi—a paleopathologist at the University of Pisa—argued that the media hype surrounding the Vampire of Venice was backed up by only a single publication that lacked "adequate scientific evidence." It "cannot be excluded that the brick slid accidentally into the mouth," she wrote.

To actually get to the bottom of these strange practices and resist misdirection, archaeologists have begun to develop new systematic approaches by collating deviant burials into datasets. The most comprehensive analysis was performed by Andrew Reynolds, a medieval archaeologist at University College London's Institute of Archaeology, for a book he published in 2009. He tracked down obscure references from the musty basements of university libraries, eventually compiling practically every known burial from Anglo-Saxon Britain: a staggering 25,000 burials. Reynolds plugged the data into a vast spreadsheet, which allowed him to organize the information into categories like "position of decapitated heads" (most commonly "missing").

Thanks to this approach, Reynolds was able to draw broad inferences into deviant burials in Britain that up until his project could only have been guessed at. The most common deviant burial type, for instance, was a prone burial, which Reynolds says in fact was a superstitious measure "to prevent the corpse returning to haunt the living." ("Burying people face down means they will only dig themselves deeper if they reanimate," he points out.) Post-mortem decapitation similarly seems to have been used to lay "a suspect corpse to rest." The dataset allowed Reynolds to probe for historical influences on mortuary practices, revealing, for example, that the introduction of Christianity led towns to exile the "dangerous dead" from the new church graveyards and bury them at the margins of society. (Distant crossroads were a

particular favorite for this, as they give the “re-animated corpse lots of options in terms of direction of travel—hopefully not in your direction!” Reynolds says.)

Last year, a similar systematic study was published by Marco Milella, an anthropologist at the University of Zurich. His project covered the whole of Western Europe from the first to fifth centuries, confirming that deviant burials can be discovered well beyond Britain. While Milella warns that applying “concepts derived from later times and completely different cultural contexts (e.g. vampires) is a risky exercise,” his data is powerful evidence that a fear of the undead wasn’t just isolated to the “vampires” of Eastern Europe. There were some cross-cultural, systematic forces at work.

In folkloric sources as diverse as Babylonian literature, the shroud-eating *Nachzehrer* of Germanic tradition, and the Chiang-Shih “hopping vampires” of Chinese legend, notions of corpses rising from the grave have long been documented. But what these new archaeological datasets reveal is that these ancient accounts weren’t just stories that our ancestors told to each other on dark and stormy nights. Many of our forefathers were genuinely scared, taking time and trouble to ensure that the dead stayed where they belong.

Why this fear in the first place? One widely accepted explanation, outlined by the folklorist Paul Barber in his book *Vampires, Burial, and Death*, is rooted in the panic that would grip a society during a deadly epidemic. The first person to die from a disease often would be blamed for the ensuing outbreak, and the body would be exhumed for investigation. Thanks to the process of decomposition, the corpse would be found transformed from its previous cold, pale, and stiff state: Fresh-looking blood would be seeping from the lips; the face would be ruddy; the body would be engorged, and have a “fresh, new skin” that made the nails and hair to appear to have grown. The corpse might even “gasp” if a stake was driven through its lungs, releasing foul and noxious gases, Barber notes.

As for why the threat of vampires and zombie still captivates us today, that’s much harder to pin down, Barber tells me. After all, the science to debunk these myths is quite a bit stronger than it was centuries ago. Perhaps the undead stir up our deepest fears about our own mortality? Maybe they simply make for great television and movies? Rather than entertaining any large-scale cultural or anthropological explanations, Barber prefers a more grounded perspective. “Who the hell knows?” he says.

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Are you my mummy? DNA tests to seek modern relatives of 800 year old mummified boy

siberiantimes.com

Wednesday, May 11 2016

By Anna Liesowska

09 May 2016

Pictures show child from Middle Ages as he is unwrapped after his remains were 'accidentally preserved' close to Arctic.



DNA samples of the boy are being taken and will be compared with local indigenous Siberian groups to see if he has modern-day day relatives still in the region. Picture: Alexander Gusev

The images show scientists as they carefully peel away the cocoon - including birch bark and copper - which led to the mummification of a boy aged six or seven who lived close near to the modern town of

Salekhard. The lower part of his face, including his teeth, become suddenly visible for the first time in around eight centuries.

DNA samples of the boy are being taken and will be compared with local indigenous Siberian groups to see if he has modern-day day relatives still in the region.

The child's well preserved remains were found at the Zeleny Yar necropolis, previously seen as belonging to a mystery medieval civilization with links to Persia despite its position on the edge of the Arctic.

Work is also underway to recreate the boy's face with the help of scientists in South Korea, and a discovery has been made that raw fish was integral to his diet.

Professor Petr Slominsky, head of the Laboratory of Molecular Genetics of Hereditary Diseases at the Institute of Molecular Genetics, Moscow, told The Siberian Times: 'In June we will travel to places close to Zeleny Yar to gather DNA samples from the local indigenous population, and try to find the genetic connections between them and the people who lived in here in the Middle Ages.'

As he was a boy, the facial bones were not formed fully, so they were separated during the long period the remains were buried in the ground. Pictures: Alexander Gusev

'We are interested in the Khanty and Nenets populations, and also in an isolated group of



Unwrapping the mummy

Komi, who live near Lake Muzhi.'

Scientists are confident of obtaining sufficient DNA quality from the mummy, despite difficulties. 'We are working now on extracting the good samples of DNA from the probes we have taken,' he said.

'It is quite complicated, because the body was wrapped in birch bark and the birch resin made a powerful blow to the tissues. Besides the body unfroze and



Unwrapping the mummy

refroze again for several times. The DNA we get is not very clean, and there is not very much of it. But at the moment we are working to clear the DNA and

get more samples and as soon as we succeed we will start the analysis.

'First we will sequence the mitochondrial DNA to say to which ethnical group it related on the maternal line. The next step will be to analyse the nuclear DNA to find out his roots from paternal side.'

When they take modern-day samples with which to compare the ancient boy, they will seek locals who are known to be 'ethnically clean back to their great grandparents'. Luckily it is easier to find such people among indigenous people, than among, say, Russians, so I believe that we will gather enough samples for our research,' he said.

'The main thing for us is to provide the clean probes. Actually we are the last generation who can gather such material, because after this cross-breeding will increase significantly.'

'He was buried at a cold time of the year and this may help the natural preservation of his body, along with the copper plates and cold climate. Pictures: Yamalo-Nenets regional Museum and Exhibition Complex



New Yamal mummy

Sergey Slepchenko, a fellow researcher of the Institute of the Problems of Northern Development, Tyumen, said: 'There is an agreement with Seoul University, and they plan to take probes and sequence DNA, check on stable isotopes, and then search for ectoparasites in the skins of animals found in the grave.'

'Yet the big and long project is our attempt to restore the face of the boy. It will be quite long, because first we need to restore the skull. As he was a boy, the facial bones were not formed fully, so they were separated during the long period the remains were buried in the ground.'

'The skin on the face is almost intact, but the bones are separated. That means that we need to go a more complicated way - using computer tomography we will put together the facial bones, and bones of the skull, and then reconstruct the face. This quite a long process and the most part it will be undertaken by Koreans.'



Salekhard mummy

Intriguing results have been obtained already on analysis of the contents of the boy's intestines. 'We have made a small cut and took a probe of contents - totally about one gram. The first interesting result was that there was no pollen here, that means that the boy probably died in late autumn or in winter.'

'He was buried at a cold time of the year and this may help the natural preservation of his body, along with the copper plates and cold

climate. The other interesting thing is that we have found opisthorchis.' In other words, he had worms.

'That means that the boy at the age of 6 or 7 ate raw fish or half cooked fish. This tell us about the way of life of these people.'



New Yamal mummy

*New Yamal mummy**New Yamal mummy**New Yamal mummy*

The items found with the body - the axe, pendant and rings - suggests 'this was not some poor boy'. Pictures: Yamalo-Nenets regional Museum and Exhibition Complex

Previously from the same graveyard, evidence has been found of the parasitic disease opisthorchiasis among younger children. 'We studied samples taken from the burial of an infant, unearthed in 2014 at the same Zeleny Yar site. The age was from six months to one year, but even such a little baby had opisthorchiasis.

'The children here were fed with raw fish from the very early age. The infant could be given a piece of a raw fish to suck or fish was provided as a paste or gruel. We plan to conduct the paleo-parasitology research further to obtain a more detailed picture of the eating habits of these people.'

He said it was too early to tell that the people were malnourished.

Archaeologist Alexander Gusev, research fellow at the Centre for the Study of the Arctic, Salekhard, said: 'We have made a new base for the mummy and now keep it in special freezer. We are not going to preserve it with chemicals until scientists have taken all the probes they need.'

Following the mummy's discovery, scientists announced last July that the remains date from the 12th or 13th centuries AD. Mr Gusev said at the time that the birch bark and copper coffin was 1.30 metres in length and 30 centimetres at its widest.

At the time, they believed it was the remains of 'a child, maybe a teenager'. 'The mummification was natural,' said Mr Gusev. 'It was combination of factors: the bodies were overlain with copper sheets, parts of copper kettles and together with the permafrost, this it gave the preserving effect.'



New Yamal mummy

'The boy at the age of 6 or 7 ate raw fish or half cooked fish. This tell us about the way of life of these people.' Pictures: Yamalo-Nenets regional Museum and Exhibition Complex

Previously, archeologists found 34 shallow graves at the medieval site, including 11 bodies with shattered or missing skulls, and smashed skeletons. Five mummies were found to be shrouded in copper, while also elaborately covered in reindeer, beaver, wolverine or bear fur.

Among the graves found so far is just one female, a child, her face masked by copper plates. Intriguingly, there are no adult women. Nearby were found three copper masked infant mummies - all males. They were bound in four or five copper hoops, several centimetres wide.



New Yamal mummy

Similarly, a red-haired man was found, protected from chest to foot by copper plating. In his resting place, was an iron hatchet, furs, and a head buckle made of bronze depicting a bear. The feet of the deceased are all pointing towards the Gorny Poluy River, a fact which is seen as having religious significance. The burial rituals are unknown to experts.

Artifacts included bronze bowls originating in Persia, some 3,700 miles to the south-west, dating from the tenth or eleventh centuries. One of the burials dates to 1282, according to a study of tree rings, while others are believed to be older.

The researchers found by one of the adult mummies an iron combat knife, silver medallion



New Yamal mummy

and a bronze bird figurine. These are understood to date from the seventh to the ninth centuries.

Five mummies were found to be shrouded in copper, while also elaborately covered in reindeer, beaver, wolverine or bear fur. Pictures: The Siberian Times, Natalya Fyodorova

Unlike other burial sites in Siberia, for example in the permafrost of the Altai Mountains, or those of the Egyptian pharaohs, the purpose did not seem to be to mummify the remains, hence the claim that their preservation until modern times was an accident.

The soil in this spot is sandy and not permanently frozen. A combination of the use of copper, which prevented oxidation, and a sinking of the temperature in the 14th century, is behind the good condition of the remains today.



mummified by accident, but who were these people?

Natalia Fyodorova, of the Ural branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences, said previously: 'Nowhere in the world are there so many mummified remains found outside the permafrost or the marshes.'

'It is a unique archaeological site. We are pioneers in everything from taking away the object of sandy soil (which has not been done previously) and ending with the possibility of further research.'



Child mummy with the facial copper mask

In 2002, archeologists were forced to halt work at the site due to objections by locals on the Yamal peninsula, a land of reindeer and energy riches known to locals as 'the end of the earth'.

The Institute of Molecular Genetics is part of the Russian Academy of Sciences. The Institute of the Problems of Northern Development is part of the Siberian Branch of the Russian



mummified by accident - but who were they? mummies found in Salekhard

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Face of mummified adult man

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Arizona city bars Satanic Temple prayer at council meeting

May 23, 2016

yahoo.com

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. (AP) — Officials say Scottsdale will bar the Satanic Temple from leading a scheduled prayer at a City Council meeting in July.

City spokesman Kelly Corsette says Scottsdale informed the Satanic Temple's Arizona chapter that only representatives from institutions that have a substantial connection to the Scottsdale community will be allowed to give the invocation.

Scottsdale now is making other arrangements for the July 6 invocation.

Satanic Temple spokesman Stu de Haan says the city has twice approved plans for the invocation — first for April 5 and then for July 6 when the group had to reschedule for logistical reasons.

De Haan learned about Scottsdale's decision Monday afternoon. He says it's too early to say what the group might do next.

The Satanic Temple's Arizona chapter is based in Tucson.

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There's an Art Deco Airport Lying Ruined in Brooklyn

atlasobscura.com

Luckily, dedicated volunteers have been restoring the beautiful planes.

by Luke Spencer

June 02, 2016



article-image

On the far reaches of Brooklyn's Atlantic coastline is a forgotten piece of aviation history.

Long before JFK and LaGuardia, there was Floyd Bennett Field, New York City's first municipal airport. Designed in stunning Art Deco style, it was once the most modern airport in the world, a glittering gateway into America's principal metropolis. Many of the leading aviators of their day started daring adventures here during the golden age of aviation—pilots like Amelia Earhart, Charles Lindbergh and Roscoe Turner, the latter of whom flew with a lion cub as his co-pilot. Wiley Post, the man who was the

first to fly solo around the world, took off and landed here in front of crowds of 50,000 fans. When Howard Hughes set the world record for flying fastest around the world, it was from Floyd Bennett that he piloted his gleaming Lockheed Super Electra.

But today many of the old hangars lie empty and abandoned. The deserted control tower looks over runways covered in weeds. I went to explore the airfield to discover its incredible history, uncovering a remarkable hidden treasure along the way—a graveyard of vintage planes being tended to by a dedicated group of volunteers.



Howard Hughes arrives at Floyd Bennett Field. (Photo: Bettmann/Getty Images) One of Brooklyn's best kept secrets, Hangar B, filled with vintage aircraft being restored. (Photo: Luke Spencer) Many of the Art Deco styled hangars lie empty and abandoned.

When it opened in 1931, Floyd Bennett Field was the most advanced and sophisticated airport in the United States. Named for pioneering aviator and Brooklyn resident Floyd Bennett, who won the Congressional Medal of Honor in 1926 for flying to the North Pole, the modern airfield was at the forefront of the fledgling air travel industry.

Floyd Bennett was built on what was then the marshlands around Jamaica Bay in an area called Barren Island. Located roughly a dozen miles from

(Photo: Luke Spencer) The main terminal was the height of luxury air travel when it opened. (Photo: Luke Spencer) One of the last long range propeller aircraft, the C-97 was soon eclipsed by the jet age. (Photo: Luke Spencer) Aerial view of Floyd Bennett Field in the 1940s. (Photo: U.S. Navy National Museum of Naval Aviation/Public Domain) When Howard Hughes set the world record for flying around the world, thousands flocked to Floyd Bennett. (Photo: Luke Spencer) The abandoned mechanics workshop. (Photo: Luke Spencer) Inside the cockpit of the Boeing Stratofreighter on the day the volunteers tested the landing gear. (Photo: Luke Spencer) It was planes like these that saved Berliners during the airlift. (Photo: Luke Spencer) A 1930s-era poster for Floyd Bennett Field. (Photo: LC-DIG-ds-08069/Library of Congress) A 1930s-era poster for Floyd Bennett Field. (Photo: LC-DIG-ds-08069/Library of Congress) New York's first municipal airport, Floyd Bennett's fate was sealed with the opening of LaGuardia. (Photo: Luke Spencer)



Howard Hughes arrives at Floyd Bennett Field. (Photo: Bettmann/Getty Images) One of Brooklyn's best kept secrets, Hangar B, filled with vintage aircraft being restored. (Photo: Luke Spencer) Many of the Art Deco styled hangars lie empty and abandoned. (Photo: Luke Spencer) The main terminal was the height of luxury air travel when it opened. (Photo: Luke Spencer) One of the last long range propeller aircraft, the C-97 was soon eclipsed by the jet age. (Photo: Luke Spencer) Aerial view of Floyd Bennett Field in the 1940s. (Photo: U.S. Navy National Museum of Naval Aviation/Public Domain) When Howard Hughes set the world record for flying around the world, thousands flocked to Floyd Bennett. (Photo: Luke Spencer) The abandoned mechanics workshop. (Photo: Luke Spencer) Inside the cockpit of the Boeing Stratofreighter on the day the volunteers tested the landing gear. (Photo: Luke Spencer) It was planes like these that saved Berliners during the airlift. (Photo: Luke Spencer) A 1930s-era poster for Floyd Bennett Field. (Photo: LC-DIG-ds-08069/Library of Congress) A 1930s-era poster for Floyd Bennett Field. (Photo: LC-DIG-ds-08069/Library of Congress) New York's first municipal airport, Floyd Bennett's fate was sealed with the opening of LaGuardia. (Photo: Luke Spencer)

Manhattan, Barren Island was once home to a small community of fish processing factories. It had a main street, a church and even a hotel. Roughly six million tons of landfill created the foundations for the new airport.

The focal point of the roughly 1,400-acre airport was a beautiful terminal, which is still there today. Designed in the Art Deco style with classical Doric columns, it was a suitably grand airport for New York City. In the 1930s air travel was still largely enjoyed only by the wealthy, and well-dressed passengers would arrive at the sweeping drive way in front of the terminal where their luggage was collected by porters and taken underground by twin ramped tunnels which emerged out on the runway. The inside of the terminal was decorated with vast, elaborate murals from the WPA program.

The Art Deco interior housed a ticketing office, a restaurant (the Aviator Bar & Grill), a newsstand, barbershop, photo studio and even a radio studio to broadcast commentaries of the world record attempts that took place here. After checking in, passengers could retire to a cocktail bar that led onto balconies overlooking the airfield, and runways that were amongst the first to be concreted and lit electrically.

Today, thanks to the National Park Service who took control of the airfield in the 1970s, the ground floor of the terminal has been recently restored to much of its original elegance. A small museum tells the story of the airfield and the famous aviators who once flew from here.

But upstairs much of the terminal is sadly falling apart. These were once the pilots quarters, where aircrew could rest and office. Peeling paint, empty bedrooms and cracked bathroom tiles are all that remain. Up a narrow ladder is the control tower. All the instruments are long



Howard Hughes arrives at Floyd Bennett Field. (Photo: Bettmann/Getty Images) One of Brooklyn's best kept secrets, Hangar B, filled with vintage aircraft being restored. (Photo: Luke Spencer) Many of the Art Deco styled hangars lie empty and abandoned. (Photo: Luke Spencer) The main terminal was the height of luxury air travel when it opened. (Photo: Luke Spencer) One of the last long range propeller aircraft, the C-97 was soon eclipsed by the jet age. (Photo: Luke Spencer) Aerial view of Floyd Bennett Field in the 1940s. (Photo: U.S. Navy National Museum of Naval Aviation/Public Domain) When Howard Hughes set the world record for flying around the world, thousands flocked to Floyd Bennett. (Photo: Luke Spencer) The abandoned mechanics workshop. (Photo: Luke Spencer) Inside the cockpit of the Boeing Stratofreighter on the day the volunteers tested the landing gear. (Photo: Luke Spencer) It was planes like these that saved Berliners during the airlift. (Photo: Luke Spencer) A 1930s-era poster for Floyd Bennett Field. (Photo: LC-DIG-ds-08069/Library of Congress) A 1930s-era poster for Floyd Bennett Field. (Photo: LC-DIG-ds-08069/Library of Congress) New York's first municipal airport, Floyd Bennett's fate was sealed with the opening of LaGuardia. (Photo: Luke Spencer)



Howard Hughes arrives at Floyd Bennett Field. (Photo: Bettmann/Getty Images) One of Brooklyn's best kept secrets, Hangar B, filled with vintage aircraft being restored. (Photo: Luke Spencer) Many of the Art Deco styled hangars lie empty and abandoned. (Photo: Luke Spencer) The main terminal

gone, but the views over the mostly abandoned airfield and Marine Park are captivating. "We're about as far out in Brooklyn as you can get," says a ranger from the National Park Service. "It is remote enough today, let alone in the 1930s and 40s for a viable passenger terminus."

That remoteness was its downfall. A new tunnel built in 1940 connecting Queens to midtown Manhattan led the way for a much more convenient airport to be built on the site of the old Gala Amusement Park in northern Queens. Named for the city mayor who championed its development, LaGuardia airport effectively marked the end of Floyd Bennett as New York's principal airport.

During World War II, much of Floyd Bennett Field became a Naval Air Station. The runways and roads inside the base were extended and new buildings were constructed for sleeping quarters, munitions, gymnasiums, and even ballfields. Most of the infrastructure from that period today is still used by the Coast Guard and the NYPD, but many of the buildings today lie empty. Mechanics facilities, dormitories and offices



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are covered in ivy, full of rusted equipment and left for nature to reclaim.

When the National Park Service acquired Floyd Bennett in 1971, it became part of their Gateway National Recreation Area. A vast program encompassing Sandy Hook in New Jersey, Fort Tilden and Riis Park in Queens and much of Jamaica Bay amongst others, Floyd Bennett became protected wildlife preserve. Nature was allowed to reclaim parts of the runway, and community gardens were recreated. There is even a campsite, one of New York's largest, named after Amelia Earhart, allowing campers the unusual experience of spending the night on an old deserted airfield, by the water where once seaplanes took off and landed.



At the far end of the airfield, some ten minutes walk across the abandoned runways lies one of Brooklyn's best kept secrets. A hangar swiftly built in the Second War, inside is a remarkable plane graveyard, known as Hangar B. Home to a dozen rescued vintage planes, the drafty cavernous hangar is filled with seaplanes, biplanes, fighters and cargo freighters. Some are in better shape than others, who await restoration.

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Hangar B is headquarters for several groups of dedicated volunteers. Often retired, ex-Air Force mechanics, or simply history buffs, these veteran plane enthusiasts are steadily keeping the true spirit of Floyd Bennett Field alive. The principal group is known as the Historic Aircraft Restoration Project

The abandoned mechanics workshop. (Photo: Luke Spencer) Inside the cockpit of the Boeing Stratofreighter on the day the volunteers tested the landing gear. (Photo: Luke Spencer) It was planes like these that saved Berliners during the airlift. (Photo: Luke Spencer) A 1930s-era poster for Floyd Bennett Field. (Photo: LC-DIG-ds-08069/Library of Congress) A 1930s-era poster for Floyd Bennett Field. (Photo: LC-DIG-ds-08069/Library of Congress) New York's first municipal airport, Floyd Bennett's fate was sealed with the opening of LaGuardia. (Photo: Luke Spencer)

rainforest," he says. According to Kuhnert, it had been leased to the Brazilian government during World War II for just \$1—its mission, to patrol the waters of the Brazilian coastline for German U-boats. As we climbed into the seaplane, rescued from the rainforest, walking down the bare steel skeleton of the fuselage and into the old cockpit, Kuhnert told me how it still belongs to the Navy, but the Parks department arranged to bring it in pieces to Floyd Bennett to be restored.



Howard Hughes arrives at Floyd Bennett Field. (Photo: Bettmann/Getty Images) One of Brooklyn's best kept secrets, Hangar B, filled with vintage aircraft being restored. (Photo: Luke Spencer) Many of the Art Deco styled hangars lie empty and abandoned. (Photo: Luke Spencer) The main terminal was the height of luxury air travel when it opened. (Photo: Luke Spencer) One of the last long range propeller aircraft, the C-97 was soon eclipsed by the jet age. (Photo: Luke Spencer) Aerial view of Floyd Bennett Field in the 1940s. (Photo: U.S. Navy National Museum of Naval Aviation/Public Domain) When Howard Hughes set the world record for flying around the world, thousands flocked to Floyd Bennett. (Photo: Luke Spencer) The abandoned mechanics workshop. (Photo: Luke Spencer) Inside the cockpit of the Boeing Stratofreighter on the day the volunteers tested the landing gear. (Photo: Luke Spencer) It was planes like these that saved Berliners during the airlift. (Photo: Luke Spencer) A 1930s-era poster for Floyd Bennett Field. (Photo: LC-DIG-ds-08069/Library of Congress) A 1930s-era poster for Floyd Bennett Field. (Photo: LC-DIG-ds-08069/Library of Congress) New York's first municipal airport, Floyd Bennett's fate was sealed with the opening of LaGuardia. (Photo: Luke Spencer)

photograph of himself as a young man and then points out one of the planes the HARP volunteers are most proud of—an exact replica of Wiley Post's Lockheed Vega, the Winnie Mae.

(HARP), which meets here three times a week. One long-serving volunteer named Artie Kuhnert shows me a hulking old flying boat known as a PBY Catalina. "It was found at the end of a runway in Brazil about thirty five years ago, right in the middle of the

We walk past an old AT6 trainer plane, painted black with a snarling red mouth and bared teeth, whose wings are unattached and leaning against the fuselage, to a striking yellow biplane, restored to its 1940s polish—a project that took three years to complete. Kuhnert leads the way into a C47, the legendary transport aircraft that was developed from the Douglas DC3. These were the planes that fought at Guadalcanal, dropped supplies to the soldiers trapped at Bastogne during the Battle of the Bulge and dropped paratroopers behind the Normandy beaches. As we climb into the plane you can still see the cable running along the ceiling that when ordered by the jump sergeant, paratroopers would hook onto. Like a lot of the aircraft in Hangar B, the C47 needs further restoration.

Another volunteer, Dante DiMille, flew reconnaissance missions for the air force in the Korean War. "I was shot at but never fired back," he tells me. In the Hangar B mess hall he shows me a



Howard Hughes arrives at Floyd Bennett Field. (Photo: Bettmann/Getty Images) One of Brooklyn's best kept secrets, Hangar B, filled with vintage aircraft being restored. (Photo: Luke Spencer) Many of the Art Deco styled hangars lie empty and abandoned. (Photo: Luke Spencer) The main terminal was the height of luxury air travel when it opened. (Photo: Luke Spencer) One of the last long range propeller aircraft, the C-97 was soon eclipsed by the jet age. (Photo: Luke Spencer) Aerial view of Floyd Bennett Field in the 1940s. (Photo: U.S. Navy National Museum of Naval Aviation/Public Domain) When Howard Hughes set the world record for flying around the world, thousands flocked to Floyd Bennett. (Photo: Luke Spencer) The abandoned mechanics workshop. (Photo: Luke Spencer) Inside the cockpit of the Boeing Stratofreighter on the day the volunteers tested the landing gear. (Photo: Luke Spencer) It was planes like these that saved Berliners during the airlift. (Photo: Luke Spencer) A 1930s-era poster for Floyd Bennett Field. (Photo: LC-DIG-ds-08069/Library of Congress) A 1930s-era poster for Floyd Bennett Field. (Photo: LC-DIG-ds-08069/Library of Congress) New York's first municipal airport, Floyd Bennett's fate was sealed with the opening of LaGuardia. (Photo: Luke Spencer)



Howard Hughes arrives at Floyd Bennett Field. (Photo: Bettmann/Getty Images) One of Brooklyn's best kept secrets, Hangar B, filled with vintage aircraft being restored. (Photo: Luke Spencer) Many of the Art Deco styled hangars lie empty and abandoned. (Photo: Luke Spencer) The main terminal

In 1933, the one-eyed aviator set the world record for flying around the world solo, going round trip through Floyd Bennett Field. The original Winnie Mae can be found at the Smithsonian in Washington DC, but according to DiMille, "it belongs here because it made the flight from here." So the HARP veterans decided to make their own. No thanks to the museum ("The Smithsonian wouldn't give us anything") they took a toy model airplane kit of the Winnie Mae and enlarged the instruction plans to build an exact scale replica, a labor of love that spanned six years.

But despite the rich aviation history of Floyd Bennett Field, it remains largely unknown and ignored not only by the Smithsonian but also by the City of New York. "No one really knows what to do with it," DiMille explains, noting that some of the hangars were converted to a sports center, but not much else. "One of our biggest problems is we're old people. The skills it takes to restore old aircraft, they don't exist anymore."

Hangar B itself was in a fair state of disrepair when I first visited in the winter of 2013, with broken windows and holes in the roof. In the intervening time, Hurricane Sandy had wreaked terrible damage to the 70-year-old hangar, and it eventually had to close its doors temporarily for desperately needed repairs.

Returning to Floyd Bennett Field recently, I saw fences encircling Hangar B, where the plane graveyard still rests inside, and which is due to hopefully reopen in the summer of 2016. But behind the hangar, one plane is still being worked on. It sits out on the forecourt runway, an awe-inspiring piece of machinery from the end of the early days of the Cold War. Around 110 feet long, with a wing span of over 140 feet of gleaming silver steel and chrome, it's a Boeing C-97, with the suitably

was the height of luxury air travel when it opened. (Photo: Luke Spencer) One of the last long range propeller aircraft, the C-97 was soon eclipsed by the jet age. (Photo: Luke Spencer) Aerial view of Floyd Bennett Field in the 1940s. (Photo: U.S. Navy National Museum of Naval Aviation/Public Domain) When Howard Hughes set the world record for flying around the world, thousands flocked to Floyd Bennett. (Photo: Luke Spencer) The abandoned mechanics workshop. (Photo: Luke Spencer) Inside the cockpit of the Boeing Stratofreighter on the day the volunteers tested the landing gear. (Photo: Luke Spencer) It was planes like these that saved Berliners during the airlift. (Photo: Luke Spencer) A 1930s-era poster for Floyd Bennett Field. (Photo: LC-DIG-ds-08069/Library of Congress) A 1930s-era poster for Floyd Bennett Field. (Photo: LC-DIG-ds-08069/Library of Congress) New York's first municipal airport, Floyd Bennett's fate was sealed with the opening of LaGuardia. (Photo: Luke Spencer)

magnificent name the "Stratofreighter". These giant propeller planes were used during the Berlin airlift and the wars in Korea and Vietnam and could transport an astonishing 35,000 pounds of cargo. The one being worked on at Floyd Bennett Field is one of only two still airworthy today.



Howard Hughes arrives at Floyd Bennett Field. (Photo: Bettmann/Getty Images) One of Brooklyn's best kept secrets, Hangar B, filled with vintage aircraft being restored. (Photo: Luke Spencer) Many of the Art Deco styled hangars lie empty and abandoned. (Photo: Luke Spencer) The main terminal was the height of luxury air travel when it opened. (Photo: Luke Spencer) One of the last long range propeller aircraft, the C-97 was soon eclipsed by the jet age. (Photo: Luke Spencer) Aerial view of Floyd Bennett Field in the 1940s. (Photo: U.S. Navy National Museum of Naval Aviation/Public Domain) When Howard Hughes set the world record for flying around the world, thousands flocked to Floyd Bennett. (Photo: Luke Spencer) The abandoned mechanics workshop. (Photo: Luke Spencer) Inside the cockpit of the Boeing Stratofreighter on the day the volunteers tested the landing gear. (Photo: Luke Spencer) It was planes like these that saved Berliners during the airlift. (Photo: Luke Spencer) A 1930s-era poster for Floyd Bennett Field. (Photo: LC-DIG-ds-08069/Library of Congress) A 1930s-era poster for Floyd Bennett Field. (Photo: LC-DIG-ds-08069/Library of Congress) Nicknamed the "Angel of Deliverance," it has led a storied life after the war, flying relief missionary work in South America and hauling salmon in Alaska. Tim Chopp, an ex-air force mechanic who served in Vietnam leads the group of dedicated volunteers. "Our aim is to preserve the memory and legacy of one of the greatest aviation and humanitarian efforts in history," he says. Between June 1948 and September 1949, the U.S. and Great Britain airlifted desperately needed supplies to the half of Berlin entirely surrounded by

08069/Library of Congress) New York's first municipal airport, Floyd Bennett's fate was sealed with the opening of LaGuardia. (Photo: Luke Spencer)

the Iron Curtain. The Berlin airlift was the deadly focal point of the

Cold War conflict.



Howard Hughes arrives at Floyd Bennett Field. (Photo: Bettmann/Getty Images) One of Brooklyn's best kept secrets, Hangar B, filled with vintage aircraft being restored. (Photo: Luke Spencer) Many of the Art Deco styled hangars lie empty and abandoned. (Photo: Luke Spencer) The main terminal was the height of luxury air travel when it opened. (Photo: Luke Spencer) One of the last long range propeller aircraft, the C-97 was soon eclipsed by the jet age. (Photo: Luke Spencer) Aerial view of Floyd Bennett Field in the 1940s. (Photo: U.S. Navy National Museum of Naval Aviation/Public Domain) When Howard Hughes set the world record for flying around the world, thousands flocked to Floyd Bennett. (Photo: Luke Spencer) The abandoned mechanics workshop. (Photo: Luke Spencer) Inside the cockpit of the Boeing Stratofreighter on the day the volunteers tested the landing gear. (Photo: Luke Spencer) It was planes like these that saved Berliners during the airlift. (Photo: Luke Spencer) A 1930s-era poster for Floyd Bennett Field. (Photo: LC-DIG-ds-08069/Library of Congress) A 1930s-era poster for Floyd Bennett Field. (Photo: LC-DIG-ds-08069/Library of Congress) New York's first municipal airport, Floyd Bennett's fate was sealed with the opening of LaGuardia. (Photo: Luke Spencer)

With Floyd Bennett's future uncertain, the plan is to fly the Angel of Deliverance to New Jersey. Like the HARP group, the dozen or so Deliverance volunteers receive no funding from official museum sources; some of the team has been working on the plane for over 12 years. When I visited, they were testing the hydraulics on the landing wheels. Gently raising the 82,500 pound plane on oversized jacks, the small group worked on retracting the huge wheels over and over.

One of the volunteers monitoring the precarious operation knows this plane better than anyone. Master mechanic Berge Jermakian made these planes fly in the Korean War and commercially for Northwestern Airlines. The biggest challenge is paying for fuel, he explained. "We need about 15,000 gallons, and no one really knows we're here."

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Bizarre plan to recreate 9/11 attack

17/05/2016

news.com.au

May 17, 2016 12:51pm



American born Paul Salo wants to purchase a 747 to recreate the 9/11 scene in the hopes of proving whether or not it was a hoax.

AN AMERICAN businessman bizarrely wants to raise AU\$1.8 million to stage a dramatic recreation of the 9/11 terror attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York.

According to The Sun, Paul Salo, who now lives in Thailand, has revealed his plans to purchase a Boeing 747 for the sole purpose of putting it on auto pilot and smashing it into the side of a vacant building, in the countryside at 900km per hour.

The businessman is describing the venture as an “important project”, that will prove conspiracy theories about the attack “once and for all”.

He plans to crowdfund the spectacle, and has already started selling “front-row



Paul Salo wants AU\$1.8 million to fund an outlandish reconstruction of 9/11.

Picture: Supplied

seats” to the event in Thailand, for the hefty price of AU\$5000 each.

Source:YouTube

In a promotional video for the “reconstruction”, Mr Salo said: “If you doubt anything about 9/11 we want to blast this to smithereens or we want to prove you completely right.

“We’re going to purchase a 747 or equivalent aircraft that’s about to go out of service, we’re going to fill it full of jet fuel, we’re going to purchase a building that’s about to be torn down in the countryside... and we’re going to crash it at 900km per hour into that building.

“If there’s just a smoking hole in the building and nothing happens, you pretty much know it was a hoax, right? ’Cos it’s obvious, right?”



The US businessman says he will prove theories 'once and for all.' Picture: YouTube

"Sure, some people might be upset, but we deserve to find out what happened."

Source: Supplied

The businessman, who was born and raised in California, added that he believes the recreation will prove that "similar physics" caused the twin towers to collapse on September 11, 2001.



The south tower of the World Trade Center begins to collapse after the terrorist attack on the landmark buildings in New York in 2001. Picture: Supplied

Nearly 3000 innocent people were killed in the atrocity when two Boeing 767 planes flew into the skyscrapers in New York 15 years ago.

Conspiracy theorists have long claimed the World Trade Centre would not have crumbled so rapidly, attributing the incident to an "inside job".



A jet plane is lined up to crash into one of the World Trade Center towers. Picture: Supplied

Source: AP

Source: News Limited

Others suggest that the towers would not have caved inward in the same way as a controlled



One of the towers collapses after being hit by a plane on September 11. Picture: Nathan Edwards

demolition in the event of a "real attack".

Some of the most prominent 9/11 theories that circulate online also cite officials' failure to intercept the hijacked planes, as well as the question of how an amateur pilot could perform such a complicated manoeuvre in a commercial plane.

Michael Moore's documentary Fahrenheit 9/11 spurred suspicion after links were made between ex-president George Bush's family, the US Government and the notorious Bin Laden family.

Similarly, cult film Loose Change, another 9/11 documentary, claimed the attacks were planned by US Government insiders.



United Airlines Flight 175 crashing into the World Trade Centre. Picture: Supplied

Source:AP

- **gleb** *Posted at 1:56 PM Today*

Hope they use a ID similar to what the pilot had and which landed on the foot path without a mark

- **engineered** *Posted at 10:38 AM Today*

fred blogs - even die hard believers that this was an inside job don't believe that your so called evidence of an explosion means anything. This particular theory has been disproven over and over again. Get with the times. and my post was not my theory - it was taken from a peer reviewed engineering journal (ie not a poorly formatted nut job website developed for the sole purpose of selling advertisements.

- **French of Forest** *Posted at 8:16 AM Today*

If i recall loose change had stated that a B52 had flew into the empire state building in the 40's, getting facts like that wrong shows the lack of

professionalism with these idiots

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Australian Sex Party blasts nuns caught tearing down election poster

sbs.com.au

3 Jun 2016 - 6:12pm



The Australian Sex Party has criticised the actions of two nuns who were photographed tearing its posters down, calling it a "pathetic" act.
3 Jun 2016 - 5:35 PM

UPDATED YESTERDAY 6:12 PM

The Australian Sex Party has released pictures showing two nuns in Melbourne tearing down the party's campaign posters which read 'tax the church'.

The party's lead candidate for the Senate at the July 2 federal election in Victoria Meredith Doig said the whole act was "pathetic".

"It's a bit of a flashback to the past of some sort of sanctimonious 19th century era women's temporary union," Dr Doig said.

"Honestly, in this day and age, you got to think about what's going through their minds and how engaged they are with society.



An alleged nun captured tearing off part of the poster in Melbourne's inner city. (AAP/ Supplied)

Spokesman for the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne Shane Healy said the church did not condone vandalism but he also took a swipe at the Sex Party.

"While interfering with election posters cannot be condoned no-one should be at all surprised that sisters of the Missionaries of Charity established by Mother Teresa of Calcutta to feed and support the poorest of the poor, would be taking offence at the policies of the Sex Party," he told SBS.

A supplied image obtained Friday, Dr Doig argued the intent of the posters was to call for religious

June 3, 2016 of two nuns in Melbourne appear to rip down Sex Party posters calling for churches to be taxed and marijuana to be legalised. (AAP Image/Supplied)
NO ARCHIVING, EDITORIAL USE ONLY

institutions that operate businesses and claim a tax free status to be on an equal footing as the private sector.

"From their point of view, it's a direct attack on the message of taxing the church but really they need to stand back and think about the privilege of the churches which they've been enjoying for years and years," she said.

"Religious organisations in this country have about \$30 billion worth of revenue each year and all of that is untaxed ... and I hasten to say I'm not anti-religious, but pro-secular."

The party was not able to confirm at 4pm on Friday, whether it had tried to contact the nuns, which it claims are from the Mother Teresa order, but said it received the photos from a blog named browncardigan.

The party claim the nuns also got rid of banners calling for legalised medical marijuana.

Its leader Fiona Patten said the attack was cowardly and unprovoked and said if nuns would like to visit and confess, "that will be an end to it".

Australian Sex Party blasts nuns caught tearing down election poster The Australian Sex Party has released pictures showing two nuns in Melbourne tearing down the party's campaign posters w... http://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/2016/06/03/australian-sex-party-blasts-nuns-caught-tearing-down-election-poster?utm_source=fark&utm_medium=website&utm_content=link

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Catholic archdiocese defends nuns accused of defacing Sex party poster

Australian Associated Press
Friday 3 June 2016

theguardian.com

Party releases photographs that they say show women 'hell-bent' on destroying poster on a Melbourne street



A photo released by the Sex party that it says shows two nuns in Melbourne ripping down one of its posters

The Catholic archdiocese of Melbourne has defended the Missionaries of Charity after a photograph emerged purporting to show two nuns from the order defacing a Sex party poster calling for the church to be taxed and marijuana to be legalised.

The party's leader, Fiona Patten, said the pair seemed "hell-bent" on tearing down the words "tax the church" from a pole in Collingwood.

"Our policy to tax the church is fair and reasonable, especially where it applies to the church's profit-making businesses," she said on Friday. "If the nuns would like to visit me and confess, that will be an end to it."

The Sex party said it had confirmed the women were nuns from the Missionaries of Charity.

An image of the women was posted on Instagram two days ago and the Sex party released it and another photograph to the media on

Friday.

The Catholic archdiocese of Melbourne's media and communications director, Shane Healy, said interfering with election posters could not be condoned.

"[But] no one should be at all surprised that sisters of the Missionaries of Charity, established by Mother Teresa of Calcutta to feed and support the poorest of the poor, would be taking offence at the policies of the Sex party," he said.

During the last New South Wales election, Sex party signs were removed from a church that was being used as a polling booth, reportedly because church workers believed they were the work of the devil.

The Missionaries of Charity have been contacted for comment.

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<http://www.worldwideweirdnews.com/2016/05/29-Student-uses-baseball-bat-split-open-head-of-priest-telling-to-repent.html>

Student uses baseball bat to split open the head of a priest for telling her to repent



Tabitha Renee Brubaker

By: Feng Qian

(Scroll down for video) A priest had his head split open by a student who was angry that he was preaching outside her school, according to police in Arizona.

The Maricopa County Sheriff's Office said that they have arrested 19-year-old Tabitha Renee Brubaker, after being accused of using a baseball bat to split open the head of Dean Saxton. Brubaker has been charged with one count of aggravated assault.

She was booked into jail, and her bail was set at \$10,000.

According to the police investigation, Saxton was using a megaphone to preach his beliefs outside the Apollo High School.

He told the kids that many of them will be going straight to hell.

Within minutes, several students and parents approached Saxton, and urged him to leave. While talking to one of the parents, Brubaker approached him with a baseball bat and hit him in the head.

Saxton needed eight staples to close the wound in the head.

Although the attack was caught on video, Brubaker denied the allegations.

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How did public bathrooms get to be separated by sex in the first place?

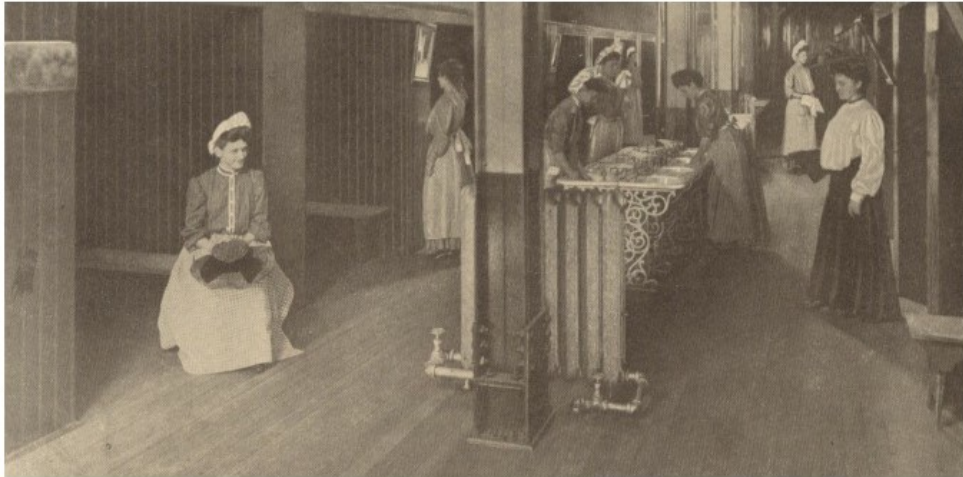
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How did public bathrooms get to be separated by sex in the first place?



S67ymbzv 1464281530

May 26, 2016

10.03pm EDT

A 19th-century photograph of a women's restroom in a Pittsburgh factory.

How did public bathrooms get to be separated by sex in the first place?

May 26, 2016

10.03pm EDT

Terry S. Kogan

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For years, transgender rights activists have argued for their right to use the public restroom that aligns with their gender identity. In recent weeks, this campaign has come to a head.

In March, North Carolina enacted a law requiring that people be allowed to use only the public restroom that corresponds to the sex on their birth certificates. Meanwhile, the White House has taken an opposing position, directing that transgender students be allowed to use the bathroom that matches their gender identity. In response, on May 25, 11 states sued the Obama administration to block the federal government from enforcing the directive.

Some argue that one solution to this impasse is to convert all public restrooms to unisex use, thereby eliminating the need to even consider a patron's sex. This might strike some as bizarre or drastic. Many assume that separating restrooms based on a person's biological sex is the "natural" way to determine who should and should not be permitted to use these public spaces.

In fact, laws in the U.S. did not even address the issue of separating public restrooms by sex until the end of the 19th century, when Massachusetts became the first state to enact such a statute. By 1920, over 40 states had adopted similar legislation requiring that public

restrooms be separated by sex.

So why did states in the U.S. begin passing such laws? Were legislators merely recognizing natural anatomical differences between men and women?

I've studied the history of the legal and cultural norms that require the separation of public bathrooms by sex, and it's clear that there was nothing so benign about the enactment of these laws. Rather, these laws were rooted in the so-called "separate spheres ideology" of the early-19th century – the idea that, in order to protect the virtue of women, they needed to stay in the home to take care of the children and household chores.

In modern times, such a view of women's proper place would be readily dismissed as sexist. By highlighting the sexist origin of laws mandating sex-separation of public restrooms, I hope to provide grounds for at least reconsidering their continued existence.

The rise of a new American ideology

During America's early history, the household was the center of economic production, the place where goods were made and sold. That role of the home in the American economy changed at the end of the 18th century during the Industrial Revolution. As manufacturing became centralized in factories, men left for these new workplaces, while women remained in the home.

Soon, an ideological divide between public and private space arose. The workplace and the public realm came to be considered the proper domain of men; the private realm of the home belonged to women. This divide lies at the heart of the separate spheres ideology.

The sentimental vision of the virtuous woman remaining in her homestead was a cultural myth that bore little resemblance to the evolving realities of the 19th century. From its outset, the century witnessed the emergence of women from the privacy of the home into the workplace and American civic life. For example, as early as 1822 when textile mills were founded in Lowell, Massachusetts, young women began flocking to mill towns. Soon, single women constituted the overwhelming majority of the textile workforce. Women would also become involved in social reform and suffrage movements that required them to work outside the home.

Nonetheless, American culture didn't abandon the separate spheres ideology, and most moves by women outside the domestic sphere were viewed with suspicion and concern. By the middle of the century, scientists set their sights on reaffirming the ideology by undertaking research to prove that the female body was inherently weaker than the male body.

Armed with such "scientific" facts (now understood as merely bolstering political views against the emergent women's rights movement), legislators and other policymakers began enacting laws aimed at protecting "weaker" women in the workplace. Examples included laws that limited women's work hours, laws that required a rest period for women during the work day or seats at their work stations, and laws that prohibited women from taking certain jobs and assignments considered dangerous.

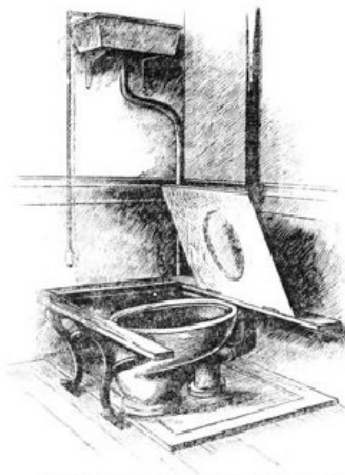
Midcentury regulators also adopted architectural solutions to “protect” women who ventured outside the home.

Architects and other planners began to cordon off various public spaces for the exclusive use of women. For example, a separate ladies' reading room – with furnishings that resembled those of a private home – became an accepted part of American public library design. And in the 1840s, American railroads began designating a “ladies' car” for the exclusive use of women and their male escorts. By the end of the 19th century, women-only parlor spaces had been created in other establishments, including photography studios, hotels, banks and department stores.

Sex-separated restrooms: putting women in their place?

It was in this spirit that legislators enacted the first laws requiring that factory restrooms be separated by sex.

Well into the 1870s, toilet facilities in factories and other workplaces were overwhelmingly designed for one occupant, and were often located outside of buildings. These emptied into unsanitary cesspools and privy vaults generally located beneath or adjacent to the factory. The possibility of indoor, multi-occupant restrooms didn't even arise until sanitation technology had developed to a stage where waste could be flushed into public sewer systems.



A 19th-century 'water closet.'

Wikimedia Commons

But by the late-19th century, the factory “water closet” – as restrooms were then called – became a flashpoint for a range of cultural anxieties.

First, deadly cholera epidemics throughout the century had heightened concerns over public health. Soon, reformers known as “sanitarians” focused their attention on replacing the haphazard and unsanitary plumbing arrangements in homes and workplaces with technologically advanced public sewer systems.

Second, the rapid development of increasingly dangerous machinery in factories was viewed as a special threat to “weaker”

female workers.

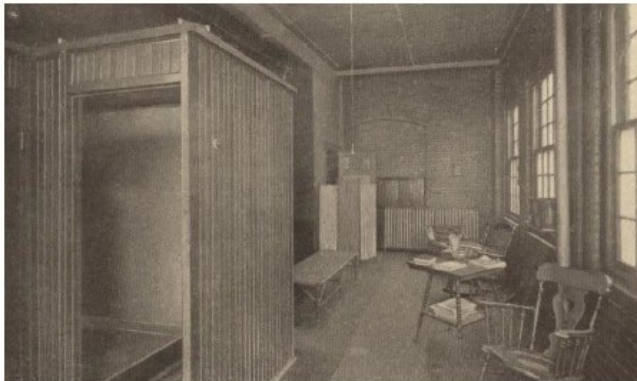
Finally, Victorian values that stressed the importance of privacy and modesty were subjected to special challenge in factories, where women worked side by side with men, often sharing the same single-user restrooms.

It was the confluence of these anxieties that led legislators in Massachusetts and other states to enact the first laws requiring that factory restrooms be sex-separated. Despite the ubiquitous presence of women in the public realm, the spirit of the early century separate spheres ideology was clearly reflected in this legislation.

Understanding that “inherently weaker” women could not be forced back into the home, legislators opted instead to create a protective, home-like haven in the workplace for women by requiring separate restrooms, along with separate dressing rooms and resting rooms for women.

Thus the historical justifications for the first laws in the United States requiring that public restrooms be sex-separated were not based on some notion that men’s and women’s restrooms were “separate but equal” – a gender-neutral policy that simply reflected anatomical differences.

Rather, these laws were adopted as a way to further early 19th century moral ideology that dictated the appropriate role and place for women in society.



REST ROOM IN PAINT FACTORY
Here, at small cost, is combined a rest room and bath room for women, at the plant of a paint factory in Cleveland. Can be used likewise as an emergency room in case of illness or accident, giving humane treatment to its employees.

A women's-only breakroom and bathroom at a paint factory in Cleveland.

Author provided

The future of public restrooms

It is therefore surprising that this now discredited notion has been resurrected in the current debate over who can use which public restrooms.

Opponents of transgender rights have employed the slogan “No Men in Women’s Bathrooms,” which evokes visions of weak women being subject to attack by men if transgender women are allowed to “invade” the public bathroom.

In fact, the only solid evidence of any such attacks in public restrooms are those directed at transgendered individuals, a significant percentage of whom report verbal and physical assault in such spaces.

In the midst of the current maelstrom over public restrooms, it is important to keep in mind that our current laws mandating that public restrooms be separated by sex evolved from the now-discredited separate spheres ideology.

Whether or not multi-occupancy, unisex restrooms are the best solution, our lawmakers and the public need to begin envisioning new configurations of public restroom spaces, ones far more friendly to all people who move through public spaces.

Comments

1. Elizabeth Moon

Everyone needs a safe place to use a toilet. Ideally, we’d have rows of individual unisex toilets, but those are expensive to build and take longer (thus more expensive) to clean. Since women and men have been assaulted and spied on in restrooms (even in one of

their own gender) it's clear that multi-person bathrooms are a potential danger to any user—from a smaller number of individuals who want sexual access, either physical or visual. At the present time, no woman can rely on being safe in a men's restroom, just as no woman can rely on being safe anywhere else. The problem isn't trans women, but men who prey on any woman.

Aggravating the current situation are the newly radicalized persons (male and female) who have taken it upon themselves to "police" women's bathrooms in particular, assaulting (verbally or physically) any woman who does not fit their notion of a proper female—often a non-trans woman whose hair or clothing they don't approve. This is a new danger—from those who peep into stalls, to those who confront a woman using the facility or waiting to use it.

If we are going to have unisex restrooms for public use, they must somehow be individual—because however ridiculous the panic over trans-persons is (and it is) there is a known danger in multi-user restrooms. Not from trans persons, but mostly from men, who prey on women and children alike.

And we need laws that prevent self-appointed vigilantes from patrolling restrooms trying to detect trans persons. The length of hair, the choice of clothing and shoes, etc, etc, do not define gender identity.

2. Clyde Spencer

Kogan,

You said, "... it is important to keep in mind that our current laws mandating that public restrooms be separated by sex evolved from the now-discredited separate spheres ideology." An interesting take on your historical analysis of restrooms. However, I don't find the claim compelling. Personally, I have always been envious of women having more comfortable accommodations than men. However, the reality is, which you overlooked, that women frequently have pain and other issues during their monthly periods and providing them with a couch is as sensible as putting urinals in a men's room. A different interpretation of the evolution of restrooms might be in the context of how worker's benefits have improved over the years as a way to encourage hiring and retention, particularly of lower-paid female workers, by offering safer and more comfortable working conditions. Your picture of a paint-factory women's restroom supports that interpretation.

While men do get raped, it is rare compared to what women experience. A unisex, multiple-use bathroom removes the presumptive threat and illegality of a man in a women's lavatory. Weaker or not, women do get raped at much higher rates than men. Might the early changes in restroom designations have been motivated at least in part by concerns about safety when a woman was alone and partially disrobed?

It has been my experience that women are generally more concerned about privacy and modesty than men. Personally, I don't much care who is around when I have to relieve

myself. But, your citation of an attack on a transgender person, by two young women, suggests that not all women are comfortable having someone in close proximity whom they do not consider to be a woman. Personally, I'm surprised that women have not been more politically vocal in objecting to a potential loss of their privacy and modesty and having to share adjusting their clothes and applying their makeup with men or former men.

How long will it be before some woman complains about an anatomically-male patron of a restroom 'exposing' themselves? That is generally a crime. How do we sort out these new problems as we try to accommodate a minority who are largely the product of new medical technology?

Why is it that, once again, I'm reading an op-ed in The Conversation that seems to be driven by an agenda?

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Utah County police cite man spotted running nude with 'bells hanging from his genitals'

fox13now.com

UTAH COUNTY -- A Riverton man was cited for lewdness involving a child Thursday after he was allegedly spotted by several people running on a trail while wearing nothing except for several bells that were hanging from his genitals.

According to a press release from the Utah County Sheriff's Office, police were called to the Diamond Fork hot pots in Spanish Fork Canyon Thursday just before 5 p.m. after reports, "a man was running around naked with bells hanging from his genitals."

Several witnesses between the ages of 8 and 16 told deputies they had seen the man, who was later located fully clothed near the trailhead parking lot. The suspect, 64-year-old Kenneth Allen Beck of Riverton, "told Deputies he just likes doing what witnesses described to see their reaction."

The man has a prior conviction for Lewdness-Indecent Exposure stemming from an incident that occurred in Saratoga Springs in 2005. In that instance, the man had exposed himself to an employee at a business while ordering food. He was convicted of a class B misdemeanor in that case.

Beck was cited for a class A misdemeanor, Lewdness Involving a Child, for Thursday's alleged activity.

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Bestiality requires penetration: SCC

canadianlawyermag.com

- Subtitle: Some sexual touching legal; animal rights organization demands new law

Written by David Dias Thursday, 09 June 2016

Touching your animal in a sexual way is legal, as long as it doesn't injure the animal or involve penetration.

Peter Sankoff says this is the first time the SCC has acknowledged the rights of animals to be protected from sexual exploitation.

Nowhere does the Supreme Court of Canada explicitly say this, but the implication is clear after reading the decision in *R. v. D.L.W.* — a disturbing case of child abuse that involved one count of bestiality.

The respondent had been convicted of multiple sexual offences against his two stepdaughters. In one instance, he tried to induce sexual intercourse between one of them and the family's dog. When that didn't work, he used peanut butter to induce oral sex.

The defendant was convicted of numerous sexual offences, along with one conviction for bestiality. That conviction, however, was overturned on appeal, after the defendant successfully argued that the statutory definition of bestiality requires there to have been sexual penetration.

Today, in a 6-1 majority decision written by Justice Thomas Cromwell, the Supreme Court upheld the appeal court's decision, ruling that — regardless of public perception — the legal definition of the word "bestiality" extends from its introduction as a criminal provision in the 19th century. At that time, the term "buggery" was used instead, denoting a specific act that must include penetration.

In other words, the court insists that it cannot create a crime merely because public perceptions around the definition of the word may have changed.

And because Parliament has failed to update its definition of bestiality, the court must rely on historic definitions that have been grandfathered into current legislation.

As the decision states: "Courts will only conclude that a new crime has been created if the words used to do so are certain and definitive. This approach not only reflects the appropriate respective roles of Parliament and the courts, but the fundamental requirement of the criminal law that people must know what constitutes punishable conduct and what does not, especially when their liberty is at stake."

The animal rights organization Animal Justice acted as intervener in the case, arguing that the appeal had not only to do with protecting children and punishing sexual offenders — it also had to do with protecting animals.

In a statement released immediately after the decision, the organization urges Parliament to quickly pass the Modernizing Animal Protections Act, a private bill tabled by Liberal MP Nathaniel Erskine-Smith.

"As of today, Canadian law gives animal abusers licence to use animals for their own sexual gratification," executive director Camille Labchuk said. "This is completely unacceptable, contrary to

societal expectations, and cannot be allowed to continue. . . . The Supreme Court threw the ball into Parliament's court, and it is now time for legislators to act."

Peter Sankoff, who represented Animal Justice before the court, says the laws around animal cruelty simply do not cover non-penetrative sexual acts, because the cruelty provisions require proof that the animal was made to suffer.

"It's almost impossible to prosecute anyone for sexually offending an animal if you don't use the bestiality provision," says Sankoff. "You could injure the animal in some way that's noticeable, there's no question. But the rest of the time, it's very difficult to get that proof. . . . It's not like a child who can come forward after the abuse six years later and say, 'I was abused, I'm suffering.' You never have that evidence."

Still, Sankoff says the ruling is not a total defeat for his client.

"I'm less disappointed than you might think," says Sankoff. "What our client was looking for, as much as anything else, was recognition in law from the Supreme Court that animal interests are worth protecting and are important to protect. And we actually got that from both the majority and the dissenting judgment — and that's never happened before."

Indeed, as the decision states, "the fundamental values at stake in this debate include the protection of vulnerable animals from the risks posed by improper human conduct and the wrongfulness of sexual conduct involving the exploitation of non-consenting participants."

Sankoff says this is the first time the Supreme Court has ever acknowledged the rights of animals to be protected from sexual exploitation, and it should be used as a call to arms for Parliament to act.

"I think it's a recognition from the court that this is a value worth protecting. And to me, that's really important in terms of advancing animal interests," he says. "So, really, it's a starting point for future arguments"

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Bibles taken from Christian store, 8th Commandment be damned

May 4, 2016

yahoo.com

WEST SPRINGFIELD, Mass. (AP) — Police say two men were caught flouting the Eighth Commandment when surveillance video captured them stealing nearly \$500 worth of Bibles from a Christian store in Massachusetts.

The Republican newspaper (<http://bit.ly/1SNQKbe>) reported on Wednesday that images shared by police show the men lifting eight Bibles from the Morning Star Christian Store in West Springfield on April 23.

Police have not identified the men and ask that anyone who recognizes them from the images to contact police.

Information from: The Springfield (Mass.) Republican, <http://www.masslive.com/news/>

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Boat from 19th century found under New Jersey home

nypost.com

By Associated Press

May 26, 2016 9:03pm

Eileen Scanlon steps across a 44-foot wooden boat found under a home she rents in Highlands, N.J.
Photo: AP

HIGHLANDS, N.J. — Workers raising a waterfront home in New Jersey made a nautical discovery: a 44-foot wooden boat from the 19th century.



Eileen Scanlon sits on the bow of the 19th century boat. Photo: AP

The 12-foot wide vessel, its rudder fully intact, was found beneath Eileen Scanlon's Highlands bungalow on Wednesday, the Asbury Park Press reported. The boat likely was used to transport coal and other good along local waterways, and pieces of coal were found scattered along the floor.

Rumors of the vessel's existence had circulated for years. Scanlon got a peek of what looked like a rudder through the home's crawlspace shortly after buying it in 2010, but she didn't anticipate the size and scope of the boat. It's built from 3-inch-thick wooden plants and is held together with 18-inch iron nails.

Scanlon temporarily stopped construction under the house and called Russell Card of the Historical Society of Highlands.

"It was beyond amazing," Card said. "I've heard about it before and the first time I ever saw it was yesterday. I never realized it was so big. I was amazed at the craftsmanship of it."

The property was once a dock of sorts and people used to roll boats on wheels to get to and from the water, said Card, who believes someone left the boat and built the home around it.

The boat will be destroyed, but Scanlon plans to place the bow in her garden.

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Bobby Brown Latest Celeb To Have Sex With Ghost

huffingtonpost.com

HUFFPOST WEIRD NEWS

“I woke up, and, yeah ... I was being mounted by a ghost.”

06/07/2016 08:41 pm ET

- David Moyer Reporter, The Huffington Post

If Bobby Brown wants to say he's had sex with a ghost, it's his prerogative.

During his “20/20” interview Tuesday night, the former New Edition singer told a new story about a very bizarre experience involving a ghost.

“I bought this mansion in Georgia ... this was a really, really spooky place,” Brown told Robin Roberts. “But yes, one time, I woke up, and yeah, a ghost. I was being mounted by a ghost.”

Brown didn't go into detail about his supernatural sex session, such as when it happened, but he emphasized he was completely sober when he did the deed.

“I wasn't high,” Brown said. “I was not tripping.”

Brown isn't the first celebrity to claim they got down with a ghost.

In April 2014, Ukrainian-born actress Natasha Blasick scared up a lot of publicity after claiming she had sex with a ghost on two occasions and found the experiences “really, really pleasurable.”

Blasick said the first time happened when she was alone in her room.

“I was laying in bed and then I felt something enter the room and I couldn't see anybody,” she said, according to the Mirror. “I could feel that somebody was touching me and the hands were pushing me against my will and I could feel the weight of the body on top of me.

“I couldn't see anybody but I could feel the pressure, the energy, the warmth pushing in different directions.”

She added: “I enjoyed it.”

It wasn't a one-night stand either. The kinky ghost returned for a second romp a month later.

In September 2012, Kesha aroused lots of publicity for her newly released single, “Supernatural,” when she told Ryan Seacrest the song was inspired by a randy romp with a male ghost.

“It's about experiences with the supernatural ... but in a sexy way,” she told Seacrest. “I had a couple of experiences with the supernatural. I don't know his name! He was a ghost! I'm very

open to it.”

Alexandra Holzer, a ghost researcher and Huffington Post blogger, says there have been reports of people having ghost sex, but says it feels heavy but not so hot.

“The people who report having sex with a ghost report feeling pressure on them and even penetration, but ghosts don’t have warmth,” Holzer told HuffPost. “When they’re in the room, it’s a very cold environment.”

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Body in yard-sale freezer freaks out N.C. woman. But then she recognized the foot.

By Yanan Wang
June 2 at 3:58 AM

washingtonpost.com

The Washington Post Woman who found body parts in freezer: 'My heart was in my throat'

When the Goldsboro, N.C., resident spotted the freezer at her neighbor's yard sale last month, she thought she was getting a good deal. The neighbor was charging \$30 for a deep freezer with a hinged lid — the kind of freezer large enough for someone to climb inside.

But the neighbor said there was a caveat, she recalled to WNCN. She couldn't start using the freezer immediately because the neighbor had promised to lend it out to her church's Sunday school class for a "time capsule" project.

The woman, who has chosen to remain anonymous, says her neighbor told her the church would come to pick up the items inside the freezer, which was sealed shut with duct tape. Afterwards, the buyer was supposed to get the freezer back.

So the woman waited.

Three weeks passed; the church members never came.

"Nothing was adding up, so I started to become suspicious about it," the woman told WRAL.

She was keeping the freezer plugged in in the corner of a spare bedroom, alongside houseplants, an armchair, a vacuum cleaner and spare toiletries. Last Friday, she peeled off the duct tape and looked inside.

The first things the woman saw were a green sheet and a bag of kitty litter, she told WTVD.

Then, her eyes landed on a human foot.

"I saw toes and a foot and ankle," the woman said. She slammed the freezer shut.

It must be fake, she thought to herself, opening the lid again.

This time, she was sure it was real.

"My heart went into my throat," the woman told WRAL. She ran out of the house and called 911.

"I have a serious problem," she told the 911 dispatcher. "My neighbor sold me a deep freezer. I just opened it and there's a body in there I think."

"Your neighbor sold it to you?" the dispatcher asked.

"I am freaking out," she responded, short of breath.

"I understand, ma'am," said the dispatcher. "Your neighbor sold it to you?"

"Yes," she said.

The Goldsboro Police Department said in a statement on Wednesday that an autopsy confirmed the freezer indeed contained human remains. The body belonged to a Goldsboro resident, but her identity is being withheld until next of kin can be notified, police said.

The medical examiner determined that there were no signs of foul play and her death was natural. The police are investigating. Concealing the death of a person is a felony, and disposal of bodies is controlled by state hygiene and environmental laws.

The name of the original freezer owner has not been released. The woman who bought the freezer has a strong and disturbing suspicion: that her neighbor dumped her own mother's dead body inside the freezer.

The woman told WNCN that her neighbor's elderly mother had lived with her, but she hadn't seen her since September, when the mother had a stroke.

The mother had interacted with the woman when she was sick, she told WTVD: "I recognized the foot. It was her mother's foot."

Other neighbors said the freezer seller has since moved to West Virginia, where she told people she was visiting her mother at a nursing home.

"I think maybe the daughter was dependent on the mother's check and didn't know what else to do," the woman told WRAL.

Speaking to WTVD, she said: "I'm glad that I was the one who was chosen to be able to find her mother so that that poor woman can rest."

- [washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com)
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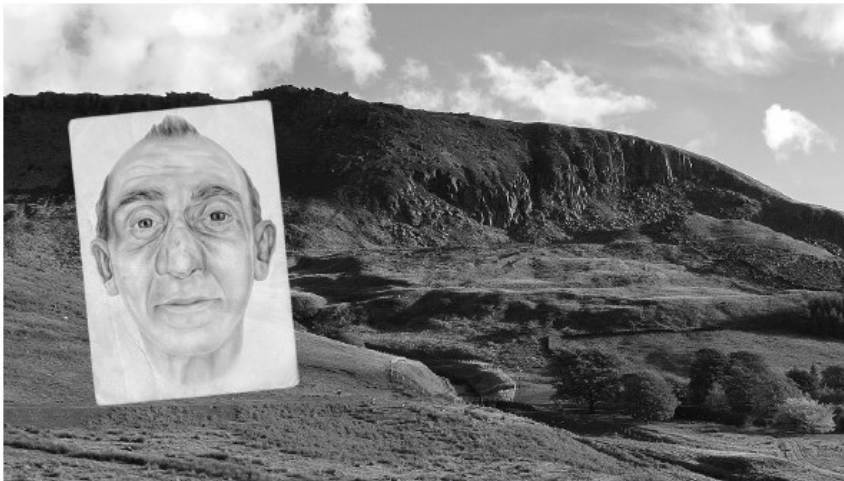
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Body on the Moor

bbc.co.uk

BBC Why did this man travel 200 miles to die here? BBC

By Jon Manel



The discovery

Time / Date: 10:47 Saturday
12 December

Incident Log 936: Man found
deceased, approximate age
65 to 75

Location: Beauty spot, Chew
Track from Dovestone
Reservoir



It was the position of the body
which somehow seemed
strange.

The cyclist who found the
man thought he looked like
he was having a rest,
although it was bitterly cold
and the rain was torrential.

The Chew Track, which runs
between two reservoirs, is
steep. The dead man was

positioned on his back perfectly in line with the slope.

Stuart Crowther saw the body while out on one of his regular bike rides.

His head was uphill and his legs were straight downhill - perfectly straight. His arms were across his chest."

He was on a small patch of grass, beneath what is known as Rob's Rocks. "It just seemed odd he was lying so parallel to the path," Crowther says.

The area is by Saddleworth Moor, part of the Peak District National Park. Many walkers are attracted by the beautiful landscape, the views, the climbs and the colours.

But this man was not wearing anything approaching the right clothing for the walk or the weather - a jacket, shirt, sweater, corduroy trousers and slip-on shoes.



He says when he first saw him “the male looked white European, he had white skin. He didn’t have the appearance of a gentleman from the Indian subcontinent. However, the line of enquiries to date seem to direct me over into that region.”



X-ray of a titanium rod and screw pinning a fractured femur (thigh bone) (SPL)

X-ray of a titanium rod and screw pinning a fractured femur (thigh bone) (SPL)

Analysis of the injury shows that the fracture was at the top of the man’s leg and Coleman has now been told that the particular procedure and

the way the plate was attached to the bone was “very unusual - outside of the norm”.

“We’ve been lucky enough to find a couple of fragments of sutures [or stitches] from the deep tissue of the left leg. We are hoping now to have those sutures categorised and classified, as to their structure material.”

According to Alister Hart, professor of orthopaedic surgery at University College London and the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital, “different hospitals adopt different techniques, adopt different suture materials at different times.”

Coleman is now sending the X-rays of the leg to the 12 hospitals which have used this kind of plate and to the Pakistan Orthopaedic Association.

The hope is that the X-rays will be matched with a particular patient’s records.

The theories

1949: British European Airways DC-3

1963: Wilderness Gully Avalanche

1963 to 1965: Moors Murders

The police are hoping that finding out the “who” might lead to the answers of some of the “whys”.



Why did the man travel all the way to the moorland track where he was found? Why there? Why poison? Why strychnine?

Some count the area where the body was discovered as being part of Saddleworth Moor.

It is very popular, especially on a bright summer's day. Not

only walkers but cyclists and climbers come here, and sailors on Dovestone Reservoir.

But it is also a place associated with a number of deaths over the years.

Peak District National Park Ranger Andy Valentine was brought up close by and now often takes his 4x4 past the spot where the man walked on that day back in December.

Driving along the bumpy track, he notes that the area is very close to where Ian Brady and Myra Hindley buried their child victims in the mid-1960s.

"If those trees weren't there, you would be able to see the hillside where the first of the bodies were found."



The mother of 10-year-old Lesley Ann Downey watches police search Saddleworth Moor for her daughter's body, 1965 (Getty Images)

Further up, the car passes some ragged rocks jutting skyward. It is known as Indian's Head.

"There are four aircraft wrecks within less than a mile of this spot," Valentine continues.

He points out where a British European Airways DC-3 came down in 1949.

One theory, still not completely ruled out, is that the man's death was somehow connected with that.

Twenty-four people died. Eight survived.

For a while, there was speculation that the man could have been one of them, coming back to the area where the crash happened. But the one remaining survivor is alive and well.

Valentine looks out towards a place called Wilderness Gully.

"Just across the valley, probably 200 yards away, is the site of an avalanche, in 1963, which

claimed the lives of two of England's best mountaineers at the time."

Going back a lot further, to the 1800s, "a landlord and his son were murdered by unknown assailants" and, a few years later, there was the accidental shooting of an MP.

"This area is no stranger to tragedy," observes Valentine.

For whatever reason, the man travelled nearly 200 miles across England to be there. To go to that place to die.

"Why has he undertaken that journey?" Coleman asks. "Why did he travel on that day? What's the connection to the area?"



To try to answer some of those questions - and to find out anything they could - police officers have been examining his behaviour.

As well as poring over the CCTV footage in London, they have also retraced his steps in Manchester.

Detective Constable Nichola Chapman spent around three and a half days studying what was caught on camera at Manchester Piccadilly train station, trying to find out "as much as we could" about him, to see if he had spoken to anybody or used a credit card.

"He didn't really know where he was going or what he was doing or what his purpose was of being in the train

station," says Chapman.

He appeared not to know his reason for being here."

She retraced his steps off the platform, turning right, across the station concourse, to a slot machine and gambling shop.

"He didn't stay in there too long," Chapman explains, "He more or less walked in and walked out. He didn't put any money into any machines."



Det Con Nichola Chapman

He then walked into Boots, the chemists, which is the shop next door. He spent a bit longer there but, again, did not seem to spend any money.

"He didn't have an expression," Chapman says. "He was just blank. There wasn't any worry on his face, there wasn't any confusion, there wasn't any elation."

His next stop was WHSmith, the stationers. He went in and then out.

After that, he left the station but only briefly before coming back in again.

In the minutes which followed, he took the escalator up to a Marks and Spencer food shop, spent five minutes there, did not buy anything, wandered around various cafes, went back down the stairs and then, two or three minutes later, took the escalator back up again.

He returned to Marks and Spencer and this time he bought a sandwich.

After eating his food, he walked back down the stairs and went outside to the taxi rank.

But he did not get a taxi. Instead, he came back into the station.

It was then that he was finally seen talking to someone.

He spent about five minutes with a person working at the station's information desk.

"We were excited. We were thinking 'bingo', we're going to get some information here," Chapman says.



Boots on the concourse at Manchester Piccadilly



Marks and Spencer at Manchester Piccadilly

"I imagine he was asking directions or having a discussion about what his plans were."

We will never know. The member of staff could not remember talking to him.

"To lose that opportunity was incredibly disappointing," says Chapman.



Taxi rank at the station

The man then left the train station through yet another exit and this time crossed the road, merged into the crowds and disappeared from view.

That was at 13:01 and six months ago.

All this time on from his death, the man on the moor is still in the mortuary at the Royal Oldham Hospital, where he was taken on the day he was found.

Rebecca Hales and Julie Berry are pathology technicians there. It is very unusual for them to have a body without a name.

"It's not nice to call somebody an unknown person", Berry says.

"I think collectively as a department we decided that it would be nice to give him some kind of identity," Hales recalls.

It was Berry who came up with the name.

"To me, he looked like a Neil. He just looked like a Neil. So I spoke to everyone else and they said 'yeah, we'll call him



Caught on CCTV a few minutes before he left the station

Neil'."



Dovestone Reservoir

For a surname, they called him Dovestones, after the reservoir close to where he was found.

That is how, for now at least, the man on the moor became Neil Dovestones.

Number 42

Unidentified bodies: 744

Unidentified body parts: 131

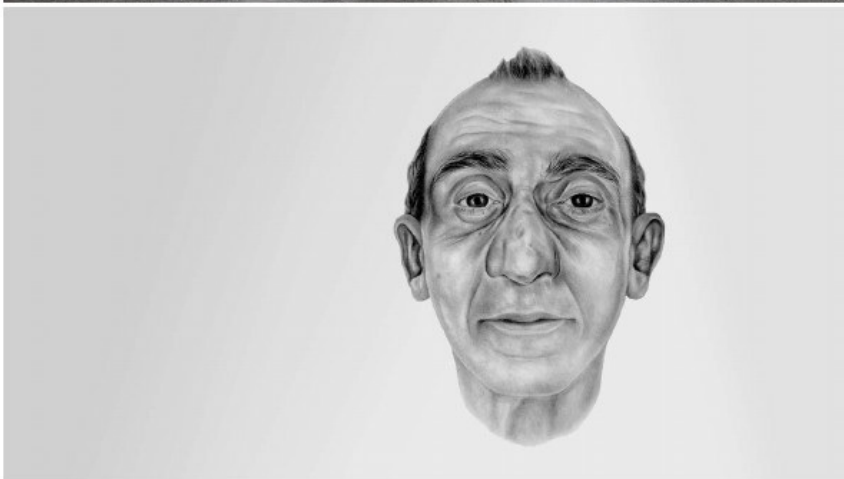
The man they are calling Neil was the 42nd unidentified body found in the United

Kingdom in 2015.



About 60% of unidentified cases are resolved in the year that they are found but that leaves many which are not.

At the UK Missing Persons Bureau at Sunningdale in Berkshire, Louise Vesely-Shore, clicks through picture after picture on her computer. Some are photographs, most are artists impressions.



These are the unidentified people from over the years. Neil is one of 744. In addition there are 131 unidentified body parts.

Vesely-Shore explains quite a few of the bodies are of people who have taken their own lives.



Louise Vesely-Shore

“One of the things we do see is they may leave some of their personal belongings at home,” she says.

Some, she says, may want to leave them for family members or may simply feel they “don’t need their mobile phone or wallet anymore”.

“Obviously, it does make our task more challenging”.

The Missing Persons Bureau works with individual police forces to help find out who some of these people are.

In the case of the body on the moor, they have been liaising with DS John Coleman and his team.

Coleman has been a police officer for about 20 years.

Thinking back to December, he says, even when he realised there were not any possessions



which showed who the man was, he still had a “realistic expectation that we would identify the male within certainly a matter of days”.

Six months on, he says, in his experience, the case “is unique - I’ve never come across a similar set of circumstances”.

What started as a body on a hillside in the Peak District has become a multi-national investigation.

Coleman says he is now “dependent on the recollections of consultants and hospital staff and on record-keeping in Pakistan”.

He is trying to find out the length of time that records are kept in the 12 hospitals which have used the type of titanium plate found in the man on the moor’s left leg.

If X-rays of serious leg injuries over a number of years can be examined, he believes he will finally be able to give the man his proper name.

Coleman says, no matter what happens, the effort has been worth it.

“We’ve got the family members out there who may not even know that the gentleman has died. I think we have a duty to the family to let them know what has happened.”



Find out more

Are you affected by this story?

Samaritans provides emotional support for people experiencing feelings of distress or thoughts of suicide - call 116 123 for free, or 08457 90 90 90

Jon Manel's reports on the Body on the Moor can be

heard on BBC Radio 4's World at One from 7 June

Contact Jon Manel on Twitter

If you have information please call Greater Manchester Police on 0161 856 8972,



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Cyclist Stuart Crowther at the spot where the body was found

One of the Mountain Rescue volunteers wondered whether he had suffered a heart attack while coming back down the hill.

But when Detective Sergeant John Coleman saw the body, he immediately thought there was something more deliberate.

1

It appeared to me that the male had sat down and had taken the conscious decision to lie backwards."



Coleman is from Greater Manchester Police and leading the investigation to find out who the man was.

More often than not, people are carrying something from which they can be identified - a mobile phone, credit cards, a travel card.

But this man had nothing. No wallet, no keys. No clue to

who he was.

Coleman says it is not unheard of to find no forms of ID on a body. But on such occasions, the police usually find it is just a case of matching the body with someone who is reported missing. Not this time.

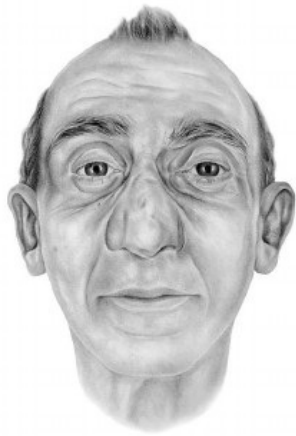
Six months have now passed since the man on the moor lay down by the path and died, and still no-one has even the vaguest notion of who he is.

There is only a description - height 6ft 1in, white, slim build, receding grey hair, blue eyes, large nose which might have been broken.

His inquest will have to make an official decision about whether this was suicide but the police believe it was.

As each day passes, some might find it tempting to conclude that the man also made a deliberate decision that he did not want anyone to know his identity.

The last person the man is known to have spoken to was the landlord of The Clarence pub in the village of Greenfield, where many walkers set off from.



Artist's impression of the mystery man

He walked in at about 14:00 on the day before his body was found. "He just asked for directions to the top of the mountain," says Melvin Robinson. "Just the top of the mountain."



Melvin Robinson

From the entrance to The Clarence, it is easy to point to the place where the walk to the Chew Track begins, just as Robinson did for the visitor on that Friday afternoon.

I told him there's not enough

daylight for him to get there and back today. He just thanked me and asked me again for the directions, which I repeated to him. And he just set off."

The body was found about 21 hours later.

The cause of death was - for modern Britain - extremely unusual.

The man on the moor had died from strychnine poisoning.



The journey

Tickets:

Single - Ealing Broadway to Central London

Return - London Terminals to Manchester Stations

Despite the absence of a phone or wallet, the man did have some possessions on him.

There was £130 in £10 notes. And there were the train tickets that have helped the police to piece together his final journey.

He started at 09:04 on Friday 11 December at Ealing Broadway Station in west London. He purchased a single ticket to get into central London.



Forty-six minutes later, at 09:50, he was at Euston station booking his journey to Manchester.



He

bought return tickets, which the police think was a curious decision.

"That's one of those questions that at this stage we can't answer," Coleman says.

But then again the return would only have been £1 more expensive than buying a single.



He paid for all the tickets with cash.

He was spotted on CCTV arriving in Manchester at 12:07, having caught the 10:00 train from Euston.



After leaving Manchester Piccadilly station there is a "missing 59 minutes" in the timeline.

The police do not know how he reached The Clarence Pub in Greenfield at 14:00.

When they found his train tickets, police officers hoped the answers to his identity could be



found in west London.

Coleman travelled south and met up with officers from the Metropolitan Police.

"We sat down with thoughts of 'if you're 65 to 75 years of age, you're a male, you're living in the Ealing area, what are you going to need?' We're thinking GP surgeries, dentists, you get your hair cut, bookmakers, residential homes, health services - all these places we visited."

Despite those efforts, posters and media coverage, no one from London has come forward to say they recognise him.

Was it more likely then that the man came into Ealing from somewhere else?

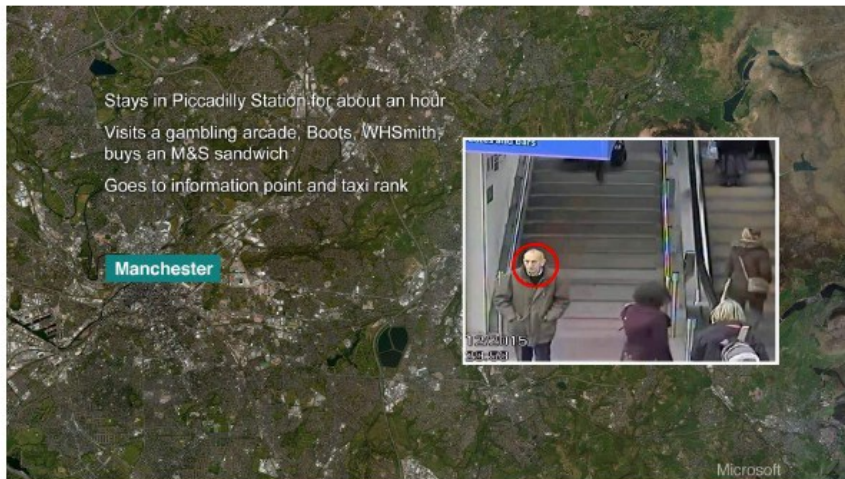
Two floors below ground level at the town hall in Ealing, you find the council's CCTV control room. There are screens showing images from about 600 separate cameras. Staff monitor pictures from streets, pavements, parks, stairwells, car parks.

At his computer in an adjoining office, the manager

of what he describes as the "CCTV nerve-centre", Oliver Martin, presses play on footage from Friday 11 December. People of all shapes, sizes and ages are walking over a pedestrian crossing into Ealing Broadway station.

"There - we got him," he says, as the clock in the corner of the screen shows 09:03. Walking with what he describes as a swagger, with his hands in his pockets, it is definitely the man.

Altogether, on his walk to the station, he was seen on eight cameras. He walked straight past



the turning to the station at one point - suggesting he did not know the area very well. Martin points to a map on the wall at the place where the man was first seen on camera.

"There's a fairly good assumption," he says, "that he has potentially come from South Ealing station." Martin points out that South Ealing is a London Underground station on the Piccadilly line and happens to be a few stops from Heathrow Airport.



Did the man fly into the UK before making his final journey to the moor?

It would have been a strange and convoluted way to get to central London. It is a mile walk between South Ealing and Ealing Broadway.



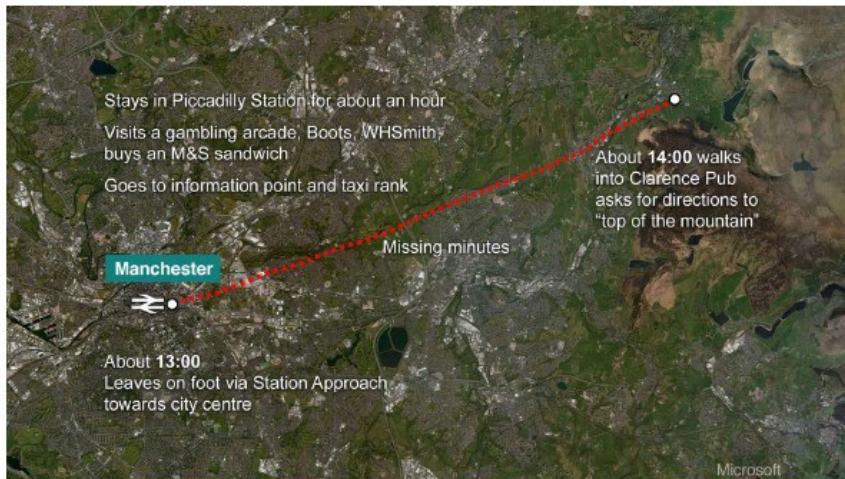
A Londoner would be most unlikely to choose that route and there would be no reason for a tourist making a cursory glance at a Tube map to opt for it.

But wanting to know why the man was walking from that direction, Coleman went to South Ealing to investigate.

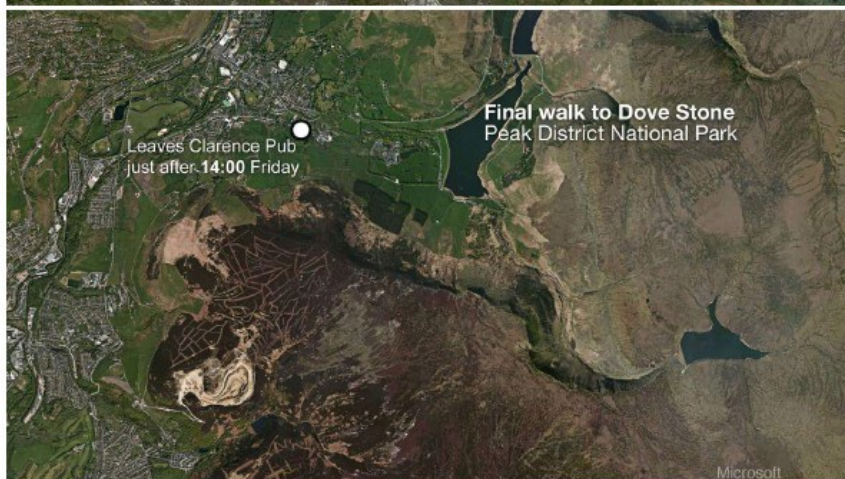
"Every time you think you've got a line of enquiry, that enquiry closes very sharply," he says.

"You think that you'll be able to track him back on CCTV into South Ealing and there's no CCTV. You go and visit South Ealing train station, thinking he's come through off the Piccadilly Line, and there's no CCTV in working order on that day.

There are so many of these lines of enquiry which have proved to be fruitless."



In judging whether the man was from the UK or abroad, his choice of clothes may be significant. They were all purchased at Marks and Spencer, almost certainly in the UK judging by the labels, and his shoes came from Swiss luxury brand Bally. And, as Coleman points out, he had no travel documents on him, apart from the train tickets.



As well as the clothes and the cash and the tickets, the one other object found on him was the container used to hold the strychnine.

The clues

Medicine Container

Label: Thyroxine sodium

Language: English and Urdu



If you have heard of strychnine, you may have come across it in an Agatha Christie novel. Or maybe you remember it from Alfred Hitchcock's Psycho.

Away from the world of fiction, it was the poison of choice of mole-catchers, until it was banned across the European Union in 2006.

Forensic toxicologist Dr Hilary Hamnett, from the University of Glasgow, says strychnine poisoning is "very unusual - I've never seen a case of it in my career".

It is also what she describes as being "in the top ten of unpleasant poisons in terms of ways to die", because of the convulsions it causes.



It comes from a family of plants known as Strychnos, which are found in Asia.

While it is no longer available to buy legally in the UK, there are certain countries where it is still in use as a poison for pests. Pakistan is one of them.

The medicine container the man had with him was made



Oliver Martin of Ealing Council

out of clear plastic, with a white lid and in a small blue cardboard box.

There was writing in both English and Urdu.

Before the strychnine, it had originally contained thyroxine sodium - a drug used by people with an underactive thyroid.

Police contacted the thyroxine manufacturers, GlaxoSmithKline. The batch had been manufactured and distributed in Pakistan.



CCTV sign in Ealing, London

Three post-mortems have now been carried out on the body.

The first established the cause of death. It also found he had no life-threatening illness.

The second post-mortem explored an injury on his left leg. A titanium plate was discovered attached to his left femur.

The third recovered the plate.

It is that plate and the injury to the leg that could prove to be the biggest clue to the identity of the man on the moor.

The injury was a serious one - caused by "quite a significant impact fall - either from a running or standing position or a collision with an obstacle", says Coleman. It happened in or before 2013.



Some plates and implants used in surgery have batch numbers, making it easy for them to be traced. Others are stamped with the name of the manufacturer.

On this one, there was not a number but there was a name - Treu-Dynamic, a company based in Sialkot in Pakistan.

It is another and surely the



Illustration of a Strychnine tree (*Strychnos nux-vomica*)(SPL)



Packaging found on the dead man's body



Titanium plate similar to the one found in the man's leg

most significant Pakistan connection.

These particular plates have been used by just 12 hospitals, all in Pakistan. Treu-Dynamic supplied about 500 of them each year.

This means the man's operation must have taken place somewhere in Pakistan. "Is it because he was a national or a visitor to Pakistan at the time of the operation?" asks Coleman.

Lifeboat crew rescue man 'bombed out of his head' at bottom of Torquay cliffs

May 29th 2016

torquayheraldexpress.co.uk

By HETinaCrowson | Posted: May 28, 2016



TORBAY lifeboat was called out in the early hours of Saturday to a man on rocks who admitted he was 'bombed out of his head'.

The emergency services were alerted at around 2.20am when shouts were heard in the thick fog near the Imperial Hotel.

It was not then know whether the person shouting was on land or in the sea so the lifeboat was launched.

The crew located a man on scree at Saddle Rock too the East of the Imperial Hotel, near Peak Tor Cove.

They had to launch their mini inshore lifeboat to reach him because of the rough shoreline conditions.

Colin Bower, lifeboat spokesman, said they had successfully got him off the rocks.

"He didn't know how he got there," said Mr Bower. "He admitted he had been taking alcohol and many other substances, including weed.

"He was OK, uninjured, but was obviously bombed out of his head."

He said the fog and shore conditions had made the recovery tricky.

The man ins 20s was taken round to Torquay harbour where he was met by the Coastguard team.



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The Phantom Bottom Slapper and Hull's most haunted places

May 19th 2016

hulldailymail.co.uk

By HDMfpreston | Posted: October 10, 2015

*Every city has its secrets. But do you know where you are most likely to spot a spook? Historian **Mike Covell**, of **Amazing Hull Tours**, tells **Faye Preston** Hull's most haunting tales...*

1. The Scratching Spirit of Kent Street

When little Dorothy Galyer told her family of knocks, taps and even scratches by an unseen hand, she had no idea it would catapult her and the family home in Kent Street to local fame. The frightened youngster even saw mattresses bouncing off the beds by themselves.

Terrified, the family turned to the church and then the Mail for help. The house became something of a tourist attraction and Dorothy herself became a celebrity and was asked along to seances. Curious crowds flocked from across Hull and reported hearing bangs from inside the house 50 yards away. Those brave enough to venture inside said they turned cold upon arrival.



HAUNTED: Little Dorothy became a celebrity after being haunted by a spirit

2. The Poltergeist of Sykes Street

This tale involves an Olympic champion wrestler, one petrified family and a poltergeist. It begins on one autumn night in September 1908 when Con O'Kelly, a champion wrestler and police officer, was called to a house after reports of a terrifying spiritual encounter.

When he arrived, the family fled in terror. Con O'Kelly peered into the house, only to be hit by flying objects being hurled across the room by an invisible phantom.

3. The Anlaby Road Tapping

The strange sound of tapping echoing across Wellington Gardens in Anlaby Road prompted the first ghost hunting investigation in Hull.

Reported in October 1852 by William Bee, it came at a time when Hull was rapidly expanding and the area was devoted to large gardens and orchards. So where was the tapping coming from?

Not even the scientists drafted in after the story went international could get to the bottom of it and the mystery of the spirit tapping sounds remains to this day.

4. The Phantom Bottom Slapper of Hepworth Arcade

Once featured in Derek Acorah's Ghost Towns television shows and book, The Coffee Cup in the arcade became famous for its stories of ghostly little girls and an overpowering male ghost, who was said to smack the bottoms of the women.

The shop was owned by popular John Hiam, who many believe was the real mischievous bottom slapper.



CHEEKY: Was there a phantom bottom slapper in Hepworth Hall or was it John Hiam?

5. The Haunted House of Park Street

In 1899 a house close to the train tracks in Park Street caught the attention of the Mail after reports of twitching curtains and spiritual sightings. The headline on May 3, 1899, read: "A ghost Hull alarmed".

The report prompted school boys trying to out-brave each other by throwing rocks through the windows. The attention became so much, extra police were drafted in by the Hull Watch Committee and City Police Force to beat the crowds away from the house.



HAUNTED HOUSE: Twitching curtains and ghostly spirits were seen at the Park Street house

6. Hoax or Haunting in Balfour Street?

In July 1912, Reverend J Maurice Turner was called in to help a family after furniture and ornaments started moving of their own accord. Spirit rappings – a form of communication between living people and spirits – had

also been held in the house in Holderness Road.

Rev Turner had worked all over east Hull and was known as a no-nonsense man of the cloth. He stayed with the family night after night but reported in the Mail that he heard nothing. Eye-witnesses later claimed it was a hoax by the family's daughter Hilda.



SPIRITUAL: Reverend J Maurice Turner attended the haunted house

7. The Skeletons of Day Street

No ghost story would be complete without a mention of skeletons.

One summer's night, a little girl ran to her family and told them she had seen the ghosts of three skeletons floating in Day Street. Believing it was her overactive imagination, they rubbished her tale – until Friday, August 23, when

the Mail reported a dig in Day Street had unearthed three skeletons while installing petrol pumps at Riley's Dairies.

Believed to be the skeletons of hanged criminals outside old town walls, they were removed to Gordon Street Police Station.

8. Haunting of the Hanged Prisoner

Hull Prison has a long, dark history with ten officially sanctioned hangings and its own share of turbulent history and colourful characters.

Unsurprisingly then, it isn't short of a ghost story or two. The most famous is Ethel Lilly Major, the last woman to be hanged there on December 19, 1934, who has been spotted lingering close to her condemned cell.



HAUNTED HALLS: Does Ethel Lilly Major still wander by her cell today?

9. The Dorchester Hotel Hauntings

The ghostly sightings of a little boy walking through the walls of the Dorchester Hotel in Beverley Road could be explained by the tragic death of 12-year-old Stanley Coates.

The youngster was knocked down by a car outside the property in May 1920 but died from his injuries inside one of the

three homes that were eventually merged into the Dorchester Hotel – Dorchester House, Tamworth Lodge and Stanley House.

Could he be the ghost seen wandering the walls of the Dorchester?

10. The Table Tipping Scandal of Humber Street

Today this street is at the centre of all things cultural but in the 1860's it had a far darker reputation.

It was in this street the Victorian act of Table Tipping, a form of spiritual communication, drew crowds of fascinated spectators.

Unbeknown to them, the real scandal was they were lured there by thief Mary Ann Summers, who would steal from them as they watched. Summers stood trial for her crimes, during which she claimed to have made contact with 4,553 angels and 43,667 spirits from her rented room in Humber Street.



Local
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'Big Box of Blood' Found in Middle of Madison, Wisconsin, Road

nbcnews.com

May 3 2016, 5:56 pm ET

by Alex Johnson

Police said a 68-year-old man may have saved someone's life after he turned in a "big box of blood" he'd found in the middle of a busy Madison, Wisconsin, road.



IMAGE: Red Cross blood box

The box was undamaged and 'good to go' when it arrived at its intended location, the local Red Cross, Madison police say. Madison Police Department

It was human blood, and it was supposed to have been delivered Sunday to the local office of the American Red Cross, said Joel Despain, a spokesman for the Madison police. The Red Cross soon confirmed that it had received only five boxes of a six-box shipment.

"It was Forrest Gump who said: 'Life is like a box of chocolates. You never know what you're

gonna get,'" Despain said.

The box was found by an unidentified 68-year-old man from the suburb of Stoughton, Despain said. Actually, the man couldn't have avoided it, seeing as how it was "smack-dab in the middle of Zeier Road" blocking his path, Despain said.

The man put the box — clearly labeled HUMAN BLOOD — in his car and flagged down a passing cop, who made some phone calls and learned that the box was donated blood meant for the Red Cross' Sheboygan Avenue location.

The box somehow hadn't been run over or damaged in the street, and when it arrived at the Red Cross, it was "good to go," Despain said.

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The history essay: America – Brave new world or accident?

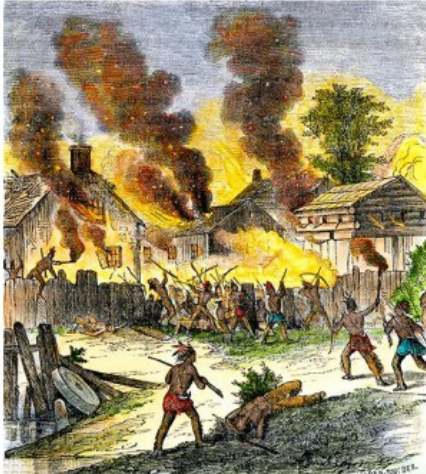
Friday 6th May 2016

historyextra.com



Far from being a bold project to create a nation, early settlers to the US wanted nothing more than to survive – and to recreate England, according to Malcolm Gaskill...

This article was first published in the Christmas 2014 issue of BBC History Magazine



An illustration of the burning of the English settlement of Deerfield in Massachusetts during a 1704 attack by Native Americans. It was one of a series of conflicts, spanning many decades, between various tribes and the colonists who arrived in the 17th century. © Alamy

Just before dawn on 29 February 1704, the Reverend John Williams was awoken by the sound of splintering wood and smashing glass. He was barely out of bed when 20 Native American warriors with painted faces and tomahawks appeared in his house. Williams aimed his pistol at the leading intruder, but it misfired and he was apprehended. The raid, a joint Franco-Native Indian operation, left 56 residents of Deerfield, a small township in north-western Massachusetts, dead in the snow. Among them were two of Williams's eight children. Five of the others (one was away at school), together with Williams and his wife, were gathered into a group of more than 100 people and marched off into the freezing wastes, heading for Canada.

Fear and privation, courage and fortitude framed lives and shaped identity on the New England frontier. Queen Anne's War, a European conflict fought between France and England and transposed to North America, had been raging since 1702; it had been preceded by King William's War in the 1690s and, 20 years earlier, Metacom's War, which had threatened to wipe New England off the map.



Queen Anne's War (1702–13) saw French and Native American fighters pitted against English settlers and their native allies © Bridgeman Art Library

Queen Anne's War (1702–13) saw French and Native American fighters pitted against English settlers and their native allies. (© Bridgeman Art Library)

Captives, taken by the Native Americans to be enslaved or ransomed, survived almost unbelievable ordeals. John Williams's wife was killed (for stumbling on the march), but he and his children were finally freed in November 1706 – though his 10-year-old daughter Eunice was forced to remain as the surrogate child of a Mohawk family. The following year, Williams published a

book, *The Redeemed Captive*, one of numerous such accounts that made captivity a familiar trope in colonial history.

This story, and others like it, is well known. But we might ask a question that seems obvious but too often goes unasked: who were these frontiers folk, and what on Earth were they were doing there? How was their identity shaped and defined?

At one level, the answer is simple: they were English migrants, and the children and grandchildren of English migrants. Yet theirs is an amazing story. Some 350,000 English people emigrated in the 17th century, making the most lasting contribution to white culture in North America before 1700. It was no easy transition. Behind every departure lay an extraordinary tale of logistical difficulty and emotional upheaval, often ending in homesickness and hardship or premature death. Many arrived in Massachusetts in the 1630s, part of the so-called 'great migration', among them John Williams's father, aged six, whose family had momentarily decided to forsake Norwich for an uncertain existence outside Boston.

What did people expect to gain from their sacrifice? Most were fleeing political, religious and economic problems. Many felt England had hit the skids. After the American Revolutionary War (1775–83), the Old World was painted as a redundant ancien régime where corrupt kings, bishops and aristocrats denied honest labourers land and rights.

If one accepts this view, it's natural to assume that migrants craved transformation. In 1782 a French settler defined the 'American' as one who "leaving behind all his ancient prejudices and manners, receives new ones from the new mode of life he has embraced". 'Exceptionalism' – the sense that America is special – has coloured modern memory, too. The 20th-century historian Daniel Boorstin encouraged the notion that, from the start, colonisation forged a unique civilisation. Colonists had turned their backs on England, a place distant in space and time that, in histories of the US at least, provided at best a sketchy backstory of little relevance and less interest.

But this is a story that needs to be told forwards from the past, not backwards from the present – and from England, then the world's most powerful country, looking towards a colonial America as yet unborn. Emigrants did not, for the most part, want to reinvent themselves: they were desperate to stay the same, and merely craved a better environment in which to defend fortune and freedom.

Many, of course, never intended to stay; many who did ended up returning home anyway. Expectations were diverse – personal and national, religious and commercial – but all colonists wanted to inspire and revitalise England, or to restore their own sense of themselves as English. Their aims were nostalgic, founded on the hope of recreating a social world that was vanishing, or recovering a better one from the past. Accordingly, the founding generations remained essentially English – indeed, they called themselves 'the English' – and they remained tied to memories of the motherland and to their relatives at home.

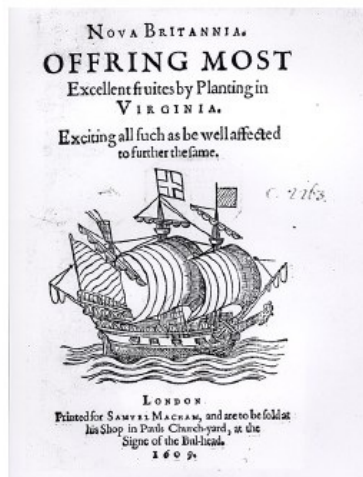
Colonial history, then, is prone to distortions and false perspectives. Puritans dominate the memory of New England, even though covenanted church members were the minority, and New England dominates the memory of 17th-century America even though this was the destination for only 21,000 (6 per cent) of the 350,000. Far more English migrants went to Chesapeake Bay, and most went to the West Indies. A vision of the Pilgrim Fathers disembarking from the *Mayflower* at Plymouth Rock in 1620 may be more appealing than one of godless tobacco farmers or slave-owning sugar barons. Yet emphasis on the Pilgrims – not least with the annual celebration of the first Thanksgiving – is misleading. They believed they were propelled and preserved by God's providence: new Israelites seeking Canaan in the wilderness. But they did not resemble the typical English migrant, who was probably an adolescent apprentice on an insalubrious plantation in Virginia or Barbados. And there was nothing divinely inexorable about the progress of colonies or their inhabitants.

The English were not natural colonisers. Queen Elizabeth showed little interest – at least, in terms of financial support – despite the efforts of Richard Hakluyt, whose *Discourse Concerning Western Planting* was written for her in 1584. In that year, the queen granted Sir Walter Raleigh a charter to colonise 'Virginia', the idea being not planting per se but rather the creation of a base from which to loot Spanish fleets. However, the experimental Roanoke Colony soon came to a sticky end. Elizabeth's successor, James VI and I, was similarly non-committal, but peace with Spain removed the need for piratical outposts, while arguments for extracting commodities to reduce imports, and for creating colonial markets to increase exports, became more compelling.

Yet royal coffers remained closed. The Virginia Company, formed in 1606, was a consortium dependent on private investment – investment that proved hard to attract and upon which few dividends were paid. Jamestown, the first permanent settlement, became a byword for factional conflict, chaos and high mortality. Promoters spoke of “Earth’s only paradise”, but English paupers preferred to take their chances at home, and speculators looked elsewhere.

“It is a matter of great difficulty,” opined the Elizabethan historian William Camden, “by the expenses of a private man to plant a colony in far distant countries.” There was never enough money, in other words – nor enough willing migrants. “We are known too well to the world to love the smoke of our own chimneys so well,” a minister wrote, “that hopes of great advantages are not likely to draw many of us from home.” In contrast to providential or exceptionalist narratives, which somehow make the US seem inevitable, in 1600 the idea that even a single colony would survive seemed far-fetched. There was so much available land, and England had so little – but without workers it had no value.

The vexed beginnings of Jamestown taught that colonies needed not just labourers but also skilled tradesmen and political leaders. England’s social order, along with its laws and customs, had to be recreated on the other side of the Atlantic. The question was: how? The problem was compounded by scepticism that occupying foreign territory was even lawful.



A 1609 pamphlet proclaims the merits of life in Virginia – a desperate attempt to promote a nascent colony struggling to attract settlers © Bridgeman

A 1609 pamphlet proclaims the merits of life in Virginia – a desperate attempt to promote a nascent colony struggling to attract settlers. (© Bridgeman)

In the reign of James I, pamphlets appealed to higher ideals and better natures using Roman law, classical history and biblical precept. Land was either empty – vacuum domicilium – or occupied by Native Americans and so ‘hitherto uncultivated’ (hacenus inculta). Either way, English imperialists had the right – indeed a sacred duty – to go forth. Did bees not swarm from the overflowing hive? Had the Romans not saved pagan Britain from savagery? The gospels, good Protestants knew, must be spread throughout the earth before Christ would return. If the land was perfectible as a ‘new’ England, then its peoples might yet be civilised and Christianised.

The most famous example was Pocahontas, daughter of the Powhatan chief Wahunsonacock, who in 1614 married a tobacco farmer named John Rolfe, and two years later attended the court of James I. She was an exemplar to colonial missionaries, but also a political pawn. Her death, as she prepared to return to Virginia, exacerbated deteriorating Anglo-Native American relations, culminating in the uprising of 1622 in which 347 English colonists perished. Noble aspirations did not die with them – charitable organisations funded missions throughout the 17th century – but now Englishmen felt less inhibited. Indeed, an opportunity for the guilt-free exploitation of native resources may have enhanced America’s appeal to adventurers, even as the Virginia Company fragmented and was taken over by the crown.

Pocahontas is shown being visited by her brothers in this engraving of 1619, made two years after she died in England – an event that contributed to the 1622 uprising. Daughter of Chief Wahunsonacock, she married settler John Rolfe and changed her



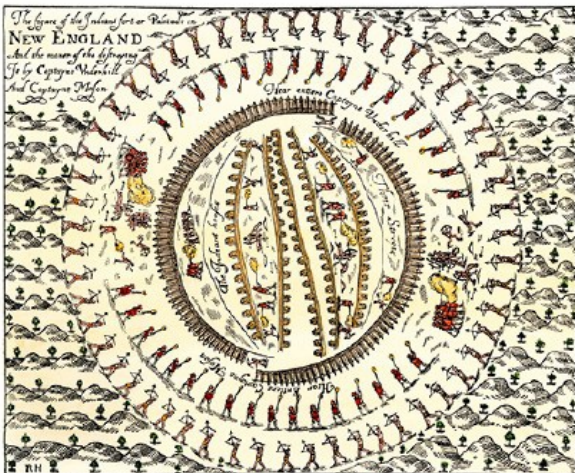
Pocahontas is shown being visited by her brothers in this engraving of 1619, made two years after she died in England – an event that contributed to the 1622 uprising. Daughter of Chief Wahunsonacock, she married settler John Rolfe and changed her name to Rebecca ©

Bridgeman

name to Rebecca. (© Bridgeman)

The Plymouth Pilgrims established a new type of colonial settlement, quite unlike the straggling tobacco farms along the James river: the communitarian godly commonwealth, independent of the Church of England. They also believed that Native Americans could be won for Christ. The migrants led by John Winthrop, a Suffolk gentleman, in the 1630s were not separatists – at least, not openly so – but they did seek to chasten England for losing its spiritual way. This was an ideal famously expressed in a sermon by Winthrop that elevated the Massachusetts Bay Colony as “a city upon a hill” – an aspirational beacon to the Old World. The company seal depicted a near-naked Native American speaking the words: “Come over and help us.”

From the start, however, the wilderness got the upper hand – not so much the empty, uncultivated land nor its hostile inhabitants, but the wilderness the English brought with them: their own religious and political differences, and the strains imposed by economic habit. By 1650, Virginia and Massachusetts had become much more like England, but with new gains came old problems: boundary disputes, protests over customary rights, subordination and insubordination, resentment at taxation (without political representation), poverty and crime. The idea of the ‘new American man’ beloved of future generations was totally alien. Far from being dissolved in the melting pot, if anything regional differences between, say, a Londoner and a West Countryman were accentuated. Sometimes they fought. Native Americans were converted, but many more died in the Pequot War of 1637 and in subsequent conflicts.



This 17th-century illustration shows New England's colonial militia attacking a Native American village during the Pequot War © Alamy

This 17th-century illustration shows New England's colonial militia attacking a Native American village during the Pequot War. (© Alamy)

People in New England and old England felt sorry for each other, although the former had better reason to pity the latter once civil war broke out in 1642. Yet even then England managed to export its problems. Not only did hundreds of New Englanders return to fight, but the quarrels were also played out in America. Colonies attempted to appear neutral, but it was obvious that Massachusetts supported parliament and Virginia the king. There were confrontations in New Hampshire, and in 1652 Cromwell sent a fleet to Barbados to remove Lord Willoughby, who had claimed the island for the exiled Charles II. In Maryland, in 1655, the battle of the Severn saw Catholic royalists pitched against

Protestant parliamentarians – arguably the last engagement of the Civil War.

The 1640s and 1650s brought protests in the name of liberty – appeals to a sense of Englishness raised above crown or parliament through vague yet potent claims to the ‘ancient constitution’. In his determination to subdue subjects abroad, Oliver Cromwell did not depart from the ways of Charles I; nor, later, did Charles II differ much from Cromwell. The ideological differences of the Civil War shifted towards more explicit conflict between colonies and crown – a crown that happened to offend

Protestants in its absolutism and Catholicism, but might have been quite different in politics and religion and still caused friction in America. New England's Puritans celebrated the Glorious Revolution of 1688–89, but the monarchy's imperialist character was here to stay. William III and II declined to repeal the hated Navigation Acts by which levies were charged on colonial trade, nor did the charter he restored to Massachusetts have the same strident spirit as that which John Winthrop had carried there in 1630.

Dissatisfaction magnified feelings dating back to the founding of Jamestown, namely that colonists were entitled to some self-government. Typically, the focus was local interpretation of English law, not independence. Settlers justified this in that they had surrendered home comforts, risked their lives, and alone understood the problems of governance several thousand miles from Westminster. Ironically, their claims, like all claims to the rights of freeborn Englishmen, were conservative in inception yet potentially radical. Nowhere was this attitude stronger than in Boston, whose laws followed Moses, not English statute. There money was illegally minted, regicides were kept from justice, and errant Englishmen – so petitioners complained to Charles II – assumed “the privilege of a free state”.

Had these exiled Englishmen, who clung to Englishness in the wilderness and loudly advertised English rights, somehow become ‘Americans’? They didn't call themselves this, or if they did it was self-deprecating: they meant that cultural starvation had turned them into ‘Indians’. But there was truth in this false modesty. As New England expanded, so more colonists lived far from schools and churches, and became tough survivalists. To Puritan stalwarts in Boston, such people were ‘white Indians’. In the 1650s, a settler in Connecticut, who had been amazed to see natives converted, imagined a Judgment Day on which Native Americans were bathed in glory alongside Englishmen sunk in ‘Indian darkness’.

Less sensationally, every colonist of some years' standing was changed – not into ‘Americans’ as such, but certainly a different kind of English person. New Englanders, at least, acquired a distinct and unsavoury character in old English eyes. In the 1690s, the journalist Ned Ward portrayed them as hypocrites in “puritanical postures”, yet fond of rum and “as subtle as serpents”.

By 1700, European America had a population of 300,000, two-fifths of New English descent. The New Englanders mocked by Ned Ward were mostly of the third generation, upon whom puritanism exerted less force than it had on their grandparents. Native Americans had been pushed to the margins of their ancestral lands – banished, diminished. If, as early explorers described, they had lived in a kind of paradise, this was their fall; songs of experience replaced songs of innocence. Robert Beverley, a Virginian planter, admitted in 1705 that Englishmen had taken everything from the Native Americans in exchange for “drunkenness and luxury... which have multiplied their wants, and put them upon desiring a thousand things they never dreamt of before”. As Eden receded, so did Canaan. America never fulfilled the utopian dreams upon which adventures were built, and worldly ideals took over.

We know of some English colonists who joined the Native Americans and were assimilated, including Joshua Tift, captured during King Philip's War and executed as a traitor. Such complete conversions were few compared to the thousands who absorbed something of native America simply by living there. They did, however, prove the possibility of something unimaginable when Englishmen first travelled to save ‘savages’ from Satan. The most striking example of a colonist-turned-Native American was Eunice Williams, the child left in Quebec when her family was freed in 1706. Renamed Waongote, meaning ‘transplanted’, she married a Mohawk and resisted attempts by her father, John Williams, to redeem her. She even forgot how to speak English.

This coloured engraving dating from the 16th century shows English settlers arriving in Virginia. A colonist to the area later admitted that the actions of Englishmen had taken everything from the Native Americans in exchange for “drunkenness and luxury”. (©

Bridgeman Art Library)



This coloured engraving dating from the 16th century shows English settlers arriving in Virginia. A colonist to the area later admitted that the actions of Englishmen had taken everything from the Native Americans in exchange for "drunkenness and luxury" © Bridgeman Art Library

All English people who went to America were the transplanted, and over time this signified strength more than dislocation, pride more than unease, a singular loyalty not a divided one. To be an American was to be self-willed, resilient, and defiant – qualities tested in 1776 and not found wanting. Earlier events acquired exceptionalist significance. The contract signed on the Mayflower, an Old World business agreement deferential to law and custom, became a kind of proto-constitution. And Winthrop's "city upon a hill" lost its reactionary colour to become an emblem of valour and idealism, evoked by US presidents as different as Kennedy, Reagan and Obama. Colonists were recruited from the past as progressive libertarians, even though Winthrop equated democracy with tyranny

and defined liberty as freedom to abide by his interpretation of God's will.

It may not matter to millions of Americans that the germ of their brave new world was formed in England by people trying to solve English problems, that their restless innovation grew out of English determination to resist change, not encourage it, nor that 'manifest destiny' was a self-justifying illusion concealing a less epic reality: an incoherent, faltering rag-bag of ill-conceived colonial adventures. But it should matter for the history of England because America reflected the nation's tensions and anxieties in the 17th century, and its very English agonies of transformation.

Malcolm Gaskill is professor of early modern history at the University of East Anglia and author of *Between Two Worlds: How the English Became Americans* (Oxford University Press, 2014).

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Broken pottery reveals the sheer devastation caused by the Black Death

By Sarah Kaplan
May 24

washingtonpost.com

The Washington Post

A 14th century woodcut showing victims of the plague. (The National Library of Medicine) A shard of Grimston Ware, typical of the sort of pottery in use in the centuries before the Black Death. (Carenza Lewis) A test pit is excavated by volunteers in Ashwell, Britain. (Carenza Lewis) All Comments Like Reply Share Like Reply Share Like Reply Like Reply Share Like Reply Like Like Reply Share Like Reply Share Like Reply Share



A 14th century woodcut showing victims of the plague. (The National Library of Medicine)

Working in the quiet villages of rural eastern Britain, surrounded by well-tended gardens and quaint country homes, Carenza Lewis has eyes only for what's below her feet.

Beneath the serene surface, she knows, lies testimony to a catastrophe.

"Under every village, every community, there is a huge reservoir of archaeological evidence just sitting there," she said. "Evidence of these life-shattering events that people like us would have lived through — or not."

Lewis, an archaeologist and professor at the University of Lincoln, is looking for bits of broken pottery from around the time of the Black Death — fragments that can illustrate how communities were affected by the illness that swept through some six and a half centuries ago. In a paper published in the journal *Antiquity* this week, she reports that her discoveries demonstrate a 45 percent population decline between the century just before the plague hit England and those after.

The devastation, she wrote in her paper, is "evident on an eye-watering scale."

The study backs up contemporary accounts of the pandemic's impact on mid-14th century England. At St. Mary's Church in the village of Ashwell, an anonymous hand engraved the phrase "wretched, terrible, destructive year, the remnants of the people alone remain," to describe what unfolded in 1349. Until the last 50 years or so, historians believed that the devastation was as awful as described and accepted that the plague probably did kill a quarter to a half of Europe's inhabitants and instigate widespread social upheaval.

[How the Black Death turned from a tummy bug to a deadly plague]



A shard of Grimston Ware, typical of the sort of pottery in use in the centuries before the Black Death.
(Carenza Lewis)

But solid, scientific evidence for that was hard to come by. Centuries of excavation haven't revealed the mass graves that contemporaries wrote about, and because of shifts in taxation strategy that occurred around the same time, there are no census records to back up the reports.

Besides, the notion of such a completely catastrophic pandemic challenges researchers' belief that societies are able to self-correct when outside forces threaten them. After all, even the worst pandemics of modern times — for example, the Spanish flu in the early 20th century — killed no more than 3 percent of the world's population. Perhaps tales of the 14th-century bacterium wiping out half of civilization were a

teensy bit exaggerated.

Or perhaps not.

Lewis's study, which uncovered some 10,000 shards of pottery from 50 towns across a wide swath of eastern Britain, found evidence of dramatic population shifts in almost every one of those communities. Human communities "shed pottery like dandruff," she said. Much as fossil records illustrate the appearance and extinction of species, pottery records show the rise and fall of towns.



A test pit is excavated by volunteers in Ashwell, Britain.
(Carenza Lewis)

With the help of community members (including hundreds of school kids) overseen by professional archaeologists, Lewis and her colleagues excavated some 2,000 one-meter-square pits in church yards and front gardens across the region.

Pre-Black Death pottery — easily identifiable by its dull, gray-brown coloring and sandy texture — was abundant in every spot Lewis searched for it. But the pottery of the next 200 or so years, when technologies changed to make vessels thinner and lighter in color, was scattered far more sparsely. About 90 percent of towns saw a drop, some of them by more than half. On average, there was about 45 percent less pottery after the plague period than before it. This find seems to support the written accounts that claim death tolls somewhere between a quarter and half of the

population.

The fact that shard levels remained constant in roughly 10 percent of towns suggests to Lewis that the shift was indeed due to population decline and not some other factor. If people had simply stopped using as much pottery, she said, then the number of shards would have fallen by a more or less equal amounts everywhere. The varying degrees of decline illustrate

how different villages were affected.

"For the first time we can measure this impact and map it to know exactly what the decline was and where it happened," Lewis said.

[3,000 skeletons, many of them plague victims, must make way for new train site in London]

The villages that did prove resilient were ones whose economies didn't wholly depend on agriculture. Centers of trade fared relatively well after the plague, even if they'd lost many of their inhabitants, because their main industry didn't require large numbers of people in order to sustain it. But farming villages, where there was no one left to plow the fields or harvest the crops, fell into deep decline. For many, it would take centuries to even begin to recover.

Lewis hopes to use the same technique to map the devastation of the Black Death in towns throughout Britain. She hopes her research will give a "baseline understanding" to researchers studying population shifts in the wake of the disease.

"Until we know what happened we can't understand why it happened," she said. "This is beginning to give us a clearer picture."

Sarah Kaplan is a reporter for Speaking of Science.

Follow @sarahkaplan48

Jack_Armstrong

5/26/2016 9:54 AM PDT

Hard to imagine a more imprecise method of measuring actual population decline than the number of shards of pottery fortuitously found in relatively microscopic sampling of inhabitable areas, buried (and shifting) underground over time.

Extrapolation from a microcosm of "evidence" can be a useful scientific tool — but this is absurd.

upham

5/24/2016 7:59 PM PDT

the article said that in 10% of the villages, the number or density of broken shards of the newer pottery was the same as of the older pottery, indicating (to them, and I have no argument against it) that whatever the newer pottery's advantages were, reduced breakage wasn't one of them. ...more

CalypsoSummer

5/24/2016 8:23 PM PDT

The article said there was a change in technology, which might have been the locals starting to use kick-powered potters' wheels. If a pot was shaped on a turning wheel rather than coiled and smoothed, the walls would have been thinner. And it's the brittleness of the fired clay that's the real issue with breakage, not the thickness of the walls.

BattyGirl

TFCFM

5/24/2016 4:42 PM PDT

If the newer potter replaced the older, isn't it likely because the newer pottery exhibited some superior quality -- such as less frequent breakage. If that were the case, you'd probably

expect fewer fragments per capita -- an effect that would seem indistinguishable from the results here.

Has anyone read the article (there doesn't appear to be a link to it)? Did/could they control for that?

CalypsoSummer

5/24/2016 8:27 PM PDT [Edited]

The advantage to the newer type of pottery with the thin walls was that it took less clay to form a vessel, so a given weight of clay could be used to make more pots. Also, since the walls were thinner, it wouldn't take as much heat to fire the pots.

You might want to use some hand-fired pottery before you employ amusing terms like "less frequent breakage" to describe it. Rough clay baked in a charcoal-fired kiln is pretty fragile.

Haikucle Poirot

Amy Peterson

5/26/2016 11:29 AM PDT

The OP might want to use the pottery before posing any queries about it? You might want to learn the meaning of words like probable and likely before talking down to someone about what you think they assumed.

diogenes_jr

5/24/2016 3:18 PM PDT

In 1301, Congress decided to save a few bucks by cutting funding for public health.

CalypsoSummerbungaman57 and Rhea13

pat99again

5/24/2016 1:05 PM PDT

Story needs a correction: "Perhaps tales of the 14th century virus wiping out half of civilization". The black plague was caused by a bacterium, not a virus. Sorry to be picky, but the comment from Shaman illustrates why this is important. Many bacteria (including yersinia pestis, the cause of black plague) can be killed by antibiotics- for now. But with resistant bacteria, we might head back in the land of raging infections that can not be stopped.

jimward21Maine344air_pleaseMordochsaqqara and 16

Shaman

5/24/2016 12:55 PM PDT

we could learn a thing or two from studying this kind of devastation - due to the fading effectiveness of antibiotics we may only be a decade or so from something similar. good article.

- [washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com)
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A 14th century woodcut showing victims of the plague. (The National Library of Medicine) A shard of Grimston Ware, typical of the sort of pottery in use in the centuries before the Black Death. (Carenza Lewis) A test pit is excavated by volunteers in Ashwell, Britain. (Carenza Lewis) All Comments Like Reply Share Like Reply Share Like Reply Like Reply Share Like Reply Like Reply Share Like Reply Share Like Reply Share



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How Burial Practices Influenced the Vampire Legend

nationalgeographic.com

<http://channel.nationalgeographic.com/the-story-of-god-with-morgan-freeman/articles/how-burial-practices-influenced-the-vampire-legend/>



By: Patrick J. Kiger

How Burial Practices Influenced the Vampire Legend

From 18th-Century poems about blood-sucking seducers of maidens to Bram Stoker's 1897 classic horror novel "Dracula" and the recent "Twilight" book and movie franchise,

vampires have long been a subject of fascination. These stories are all based upon a centuries-old myth, in which human corpses are reanimated as ghoulish, nocturnal creatures who subsist by drinking the blood of unsuspecting victims—who then are transformed into vampires themselves.

Belief in blood-drinking supernatural creatures actually dates back to ancient times. The Greeks, for example, told tales of spirits called empusas took the form of beautiful women and seduced young men so that they could prey upon them. But the fictional vampires in our popular culture have their roots in plague-ravaged Medieval and Renaissance Europe, where fear of the mysterious disease—and lack of knowledge about how human bodies decomposed in mass graves—helped inspire legends of undead blood-drinking creatures who spread death far and wide.



Burying Victims of the Bubonic Plague

When you consider the awful magnitude of those epidemics, it's not hard to understand how they could drive the human imagination to feverish extremes. The infamous "Black Death" hit Europe hard in the 1300s, by some accounts killing as much as one-third of the continent's population of 25 million. But that plague pandemic was just the first of numerous outbreaks over the next several centuries, which took the lives of hundreds of thousands of people. The cause of the lethal disease—a bacterium spread by rats—wasn't discovered until 1897, and fear of the unknown made Europeans of that time susceptible to a

paranormal explanation.

The plague killed so many victims that they often were buried in mass graves, and those burial places sometimes had to be reopened to dispose of more bodies. The gravediggers who had to perform that unpleasant work were horrified by what they saw—corpses with blood flowing from their noses and mouths, and jaws that appeared to be chewing on their burial shrouds. They also heard strange sounds coming from the gravesites, which sounded to them like the growling of hungry stomachs.



A Mass Grave

Those observations probably made it easy to believe that the mass graves were the resting place of what became known as vampires. As University of Florence forensic archaeologist Matteo Borrini explained in a 2010 National Geographic News article, the process of decomposition was not very well understood at the time, and people who saw those corpses wouldn't have known that there were non-supernatural explanations for what they saw. As

the human body decays, it releases "purge fluid," a dark-colored liquid that can flow freely from a corpse's nose and mouth. That fluid sometimes dripped onto and moistened the shroud in which the corpses had been wrapped. That could tear the cloth and make it appear that the dead person was biting through postmortem to make those holes.

As for the noises, Paul Barber, author of the book "Vampires, Burial and Death: Folklore and Reality," explains that the plague usually struck in late summer and early autumn, because the rat flea, one of the disease's vectors, was most active then. When bodies were buried in shallow graves in warm weather, the process of decomposition was speeded up. That, in turn, caused the buildup of gases that caused the bodies to bloat and burst—"causing a sound rather like an epidemic stomach-rumbling," Barber wrote in his book.



A Skeleton with an Iron Stake in Chest By: Bin im Garten

The fear that then ensued led Europeans to perform some macabre rites, in a desperate effort to keep the supposed vampires from rising again to spread the plague and claim more victims. According to Barber's book, Slavs living in Germany believed that they could protect

themselves from vampires by digging up a corpse and pounding a consecrated nail into its head and a wooden stake through its heart. But if people in the community continued to fall ill, the vampire-hunters might dig up the corpse one more time and burn it, and then scatter the ashes in the wind.

Other anti-vampire rituals were even more bizarre. As Bulgarian archaeologist Alexandra

Petrova explained in a 2014 television interview, a stone, a dead cat or chicken sometimes was placed across a corpse in the belief that it would prevent reanimation. In other instances, the feet might be tied together to cause the dead person stumble if he or she got up.

Today, the fear that those corpses were vampires might seem like a crazy superstition. But as Borrini explained in a 2009 interview with the publication Archaeology Archive: "In the absence of scientific knowledge, the human mind can misinterpret the reality to create monsters." And those beliefs also helped create the vampire legend that has been further embellished by generations of writers and filmmakers.

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Iowa Native American burial site claim prompts oil pipeline halt

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) -

kcrg.com

By Associated Press |

Posted: Fri 8:26 PM, May 27, 2016

The possibility of an American Indian burial site in Iowa may require relocation of a crude oil pipeline route which would further delay the beginning of construction in the only one of four states where work hasn't yet begun.

The Dakota Access pipeline passes through the Big Sioux Wildlife Management area and Standing Rock Sioux Tribe leaders say there is a burial site. The pipeline also goes through the Dakotas and Illinois.

The possibility prompted the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which owns the property, to revoke a construction permit for the area and issue a stop work order to Dakota Access until further notice.

A spokeswoman for Dakota Access says if something is confirmed the company will work with the appropriate agencies to make any necessary adjustments.

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Crowdsourced Database Will Locate the Burial Sites of Forgotten US Slaves

in Archives, History | May 18th, 2016 [Leave a Comment](#)

[openculture.com](#)



slave grave database

Image courtesy of National Burial Database of Enslaved Americans

The stories are infrequent but deeply compelling: one recent news item in the AP's *The Big Story* describes the bones of 14 people from the 18th or early 19th century, discovered in Albany, NY, "wrapped in shrouds, buried in pine boxes and—over centuries—forgotten." Seven adults, five infants, and two children, soon to be "publically memorialized and [re]buried in personalized boxes beside prominent families in old Albany."

Over the 11 years since the bones' discovery by construction workers, scientists have been able to piece together clues about what these lives

were like: marked by constant toil and physical hardship. Genetic markers, and broken bones, notched and missing teeth, and arthritic joints offer the only means of identifying the remains. A granite headstone donated to the new gravesite will read, "Here lies the remains of 14 souls known only to God. Enslaved in life, they are slaves no more."

In 1991, many miles south in lower Manhattan, a find of the remains of 419 people eventually gave rise to an even more impressive memorial and museum, the African Burial Ground National Monument, a reminder of not only the slave labor that built New York City, but also of the people bought and sold in the once bustling slave market at what is now Wall Street.



Elmwood

Creative Commons photo by Bruce Guthrie

Memorials like this one and the recent Albany burial site do not change the facts or right the wrongs of history, but they do make visible lives and histories long buried and forgotten. "Among the scars left by the heritage of slavery," writes Edward Rothstein at *The New York Times*, "one of the greatest is an absence: where are the memorials, cemeteries, architectural structures or sturdy sanctuaries that typically provide the ground for a people's memory?" This is precisely the question Sandra Arnold is now asking, in a very literal sense, for a project called The National Burial Database of Enslaved Americans (NBDEA).

A Graduate Fellow at Brown University, Arnold founded the Periwinkle Initiative, "a public humanities and education initiative dedicated to preserving cultural heritage associated with enslaved Americans." The NBDEA—Periwinkle's core project in collaboration with Fordham University, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the 1772 Foundation—aims, writes Arnold at *The New York Times*, to "be the first national repository of information on the grave sites of individuals who died while enslaved or after they were emancipated."

The grave sites The NBDEA compiles will depend in some part on the public: "Anyone who comes to the website will eventually be able to submit information about these places and conduct searches." Currently, the site remains in development, unavailable for public searches, but users can make preliminary submissions. Arnold describes the process of sifting through the submissions she has received as "painful."

Burial grounds that should be revered spaces... instead are covered by playgrounds and apartment complexes. I have learned that many grave sites of formerly enslaved Americans are abandoned, undocumented, desecrated by the asphalt of "development," and lack any type of memorialization or recognition. The burial grounds are often found incidentally by developers under parks and office buildings, and for many of the sites, oral history is their only source of documentation.

Just such an oral history preserved the unmarked gravesite of one of Arnold's ancestors in her hometown in West Tennessee. Allison Meier at Hyperallergic points to some specifically troubled sites like those Arnold describes, including "a slave cemetery... bulldozed in Houston," another "covered with asphalt in Atlanta," and a third "found below a Harlem bus depot."

Arnold hopes that recording and memorializing these "sacred spaces... can contribute to healing, understanding and potentially even reconciliation." Additionally, she cites a "pragmatic" rationale for the project, since "burial grounds are valuable resources for scholars and historians, serving as road maps for genealogical and historical research."

The project presents a tremendous opportunity for the many thousands of citizen historians scattered across the country to come together and fill in the absences in our historical memory; and the centralized database will also draw more attention to the few memorials that do exist, many of which, writes Meier, "are often staggeringly small in relation to the number of lives they remember." She refers to the example of a "miniature mass grave monument" in Memphis' Elmwood Cemetery (above), a "single stone [that] memorializes over 300 slaves who died between 1852 and 1865."

Like The Freedman's Bureau Project, a recent online database of 1.5 million historical documents related to slavery, The NBDEA will further historicize and humanize "overlooked lives," writes Arnold, that "are an inextricable part of the historical narrative of our country."

Can can visit The National Burial Database of Enslaved Americans [here](#).

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95 Years Ago Today White Rioters Carried Out This Little-Known Terrorist Attack (VIDEO)

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95 Years Ago Today White Rioters Carried Out This Little-Known Terrorist Attack (VIDEO)

Zach Cartwright June 2, 2016

At the start of the roaring twenties, Tulsa, Oklahoma housed America's wealthiest black community. But on the night of June 1, Tulsa became the site of one of the worst hate crimes in US history as white rioters took to the streets to act out horrific violence.

The 1921 Tulsa Race Riot, otherwise known as the Destruction of Black Wall Street, encompassed the mass murder of as many as 300 affluent African American residents of Tulsa's thriving Greenwood Avenue business district and the firebombing of approximately 1,200 homes and businesses between May 31 and June 1. An estimated 10,000 were left homeless in the aftermath of the attack.

The massacre came on the heels of the alleged assault of a white elevator operator by a black man. The local white newspapers at the time flamed tensions, supposedly even calling for a "lynching," but historical documents and research show that there was very likely no attack at all. However, the supposed assault was quickly used as an excuse to destroy the prosperous Greenwood neighborhood and all the black citizens living there.

As CBS reported in the below segment, city officials seemed to be in on the mob, focusing on disarming and detaining black citizens rather than working to contain the blaze or subdue the white rioters.

During the massacre, mobs of white rioters went door to door throughout Greenwood's 35 blocks, disarmed the residents, ransacked their homes, and then set them ablaze. White rioters even took to the skies, firebombing houses from small planes. Oklahoma lawyer Buck Colbert Franklin described the horrific attack in his autobiography.

"I could see planes circling in mid-air. They grew in number and hummed, darted and dipped low. I could hear something like hail falling upon the top of my office building. Down East Archer, I saw the old Mid-Way hotel on fire, burning from its top, and then another and another and another building began to burn from their top."

The governor's response was to declare martial law, calling in the national guard to arrest and imprison all the remaining black Greenwood residents, jailing them for up to eight days.

Following the riots, 57 black people were arrested for rioting, with no white people being prosecuted. The men, women, and children who were killed were thrown into unmarked



tulsariot

graves, with orders from city officials to not conduct any funeral or burial ceremonies. Despite some promises to rebuild Greenwood, city ordinances were passed to discriminate against them and prevent the rebuilding of burned properties.

The violence of the Tulsa Race Riot was forgotten among history, remembered only as a "taboo" topic not to be discussed

in classrooms. It wasn't until 1996 when the Oklahoma legislature agreed to commission a historical record of the terrorist attack, along with compensatory programs for the descendants of those murdered in the senseless massacre, with the report finally being published in 2001.

Even 85 years after the attack, some legislators balked at the idea of reparations for Greenwood's descendants, arguing it was unconstitutional. In 2010, the legislature commissioned a park to be built in the Greenwood district, along with a memorial to honor those slaughtered.



(Photo by the New York Times)

On June 1, after Americans celebrate Memorial Day, it's important to also memorialize those killed simply for the crime of having darker skin and daring to share economic prosperity with white people. America can only move on from its violent past by making sure the victims of its most violent and senseless acts are never forgotten.

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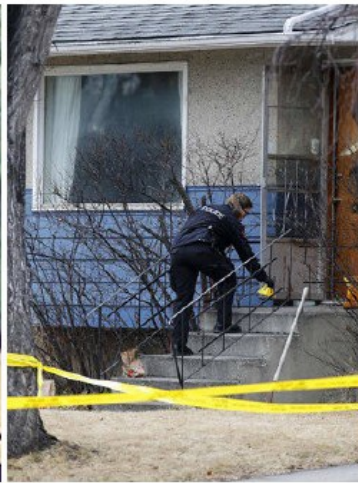
Cop's son butchered five partygoers 'because they were werewolves and zombies'

By Peter Walker / Published 18th May 2016

dailystar.co.uk



PH/AP



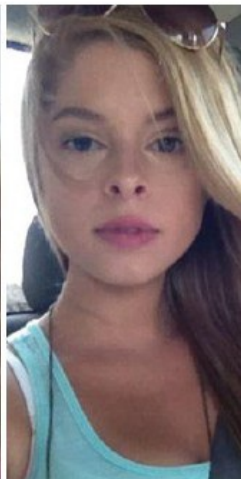
HORRIFIC: Police found five victims either dead or dying at the Calgary house

Matthew de Grood allegedly told police he was attacking mythical creatures after stabbing Lawrence Hong, 27, Joshua Hunter, 23, Kaitlin Perras, 23, Zackariah Rathwell, 21, and Jordan Segura, 22.

Officers also say they found garlic in the 24-year-old's right sock which the lad claimed was to keep the zombies

away.

Grood admits stabbing all five – but denies murder – and so since Monday has been standing trial.



PH

VICTIMS: (l-r) Zackariah Rathwell, Kaitlin Perras and Jordan Segura

"The victims were stabbed and killed," said Crown prosecutor Neil Wiberg.

The trial heard that Brendan McCabe invited Matthew Douglas de Grood to the end-of university semester party in Calgary, the Canadian capital, on Wednesday, April 14, 2014.

Bizarrely, he allegedly turned up with a kitchen knife and clove of garlic which

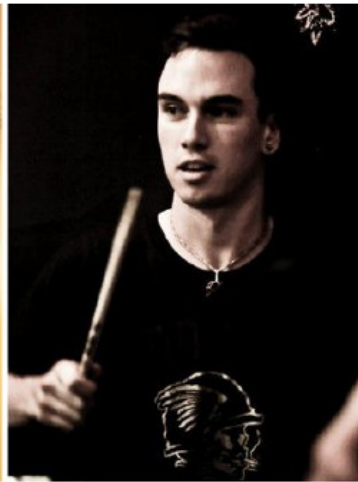
he offered to the host saying he "may need it".

UNEXPECTED: Victims Lawrence Hong and Joshua Hunter

"He lived his life with kindness"

Marlene, the mother of victim Lawrence Hong

After the frenzied attack police rocked up within four minutes where they say they found Hunter dying in the front lawn.



PH

Rathwell and Segura were dead in the home, Hong was being treated by a friend and Perras was unconscious.

Families kicked-off the trial paying tribute to the victims.

Hong's mother Marlene said "he lived his life with kindness," and Perras' sister Nicky said: "Kaiti cared so deeply."

Grood's legal team are expected to work on a "not criminally responsible defence" – equivalent to "diminished responsibility" in the UK.

It has been branded Calgary's worst murder in history.

The trial continues.

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AP

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'This is the worst mass murder in our history': Police chief's horror

01:09 EST, 16 April 2014 |

dailymail.co.uk

Daily Mail

.com

MailOnline US - news, sport, celebrity, science and health stories

'This is the worst mass murder in the history of our city': Calgary police describe horrific stabbing as inspector's son is charged with murder of five students at house party

▪ **Matthew de Grood charged with murders**

of four men and a woman

- **Joshua Hunter, Jordan Segura, Lawrence Hong, Kaitlin Perras, and Zackariah Rathwell were attacked with kitchen knife**
- **De Grood's father - an Inspector in the Calgary police - is said to be heartbroken as 22-year-old son is named as suspect**

By Jessica Jerreat and Joel Christie



Arrested: Matthew de Grood is facing murder charges over the stabbing

The son of a Calgary city police officer has been charged with murder after five students were stabbed to death at a house party to celebrate the end of term on Tuesday.

Matthew Douglas de Grood, whose father has been in the Canadian police for more than 30 years, is accused of using a kitchen knife to kill the victims.

Joshua Hunter, Jordan Segura, Lawrence Hong, Kaitlin Perras, and Zackariah Rathwell, who were all students in their 20s, were killed.

The attack has been described by the police chief as 'the worst mass murder in Calgary's history'.

The 22-year-old law and psychology student had been invited to the all-day party and turned up after finishing his shift at a nearby grocery store.

Police chief Rick Hanson said de Grood 'targeted the victims one by one, stabbing them several times' at about 1am.

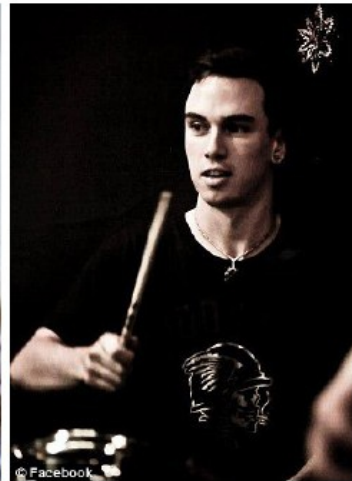
Three of the victims died at the scene and a fourth man and Miss Perras died in hospital.

All of them had been at the party, which was being held in a rental property near the campus.

De Grood was arrested about 40 minutes after police were called and had to be treated for dog bites after a K9 unit was used to track the suspect.



Loss: Kaitlin Perras died from her injuries in hospital after being stabbed at a party



Friends: Victims Zackariah Rathwell, left, and Joshua Hunter, right, were in a band together



Attacked: Jordan Segura was one of the five victims stabbed at the party

Chief Hanson said a motive for the attack wasn't clear and it did not appear as if de Grood had been under the influence of drink or drugs at the time.

He added that the murder suspect's father, Inspector Doug de Grood who has served with Calgary police for 33 years, is heartbroken by the attack.

'They are now feeling so much sorrow. Those young people are dead and they are absolutely devastated,' he said.

Neither the suspected killer or the victims, nearly all of whom studied at University of Calgary, had been in trouble with the police previously.

The party was not rowdy, neighbors said, adding that students had gathered around a fire pit to talk about politics and the stock market.

Police Chief Hanson said the attack did not appear to have been provoked by any of the 20 students who were at the party. 'They were all good kids,' he added.

A police officer talks to a man and two women near a house where five people were stabbed in the early morning hours in Calgary



Missed: The surviving members of the band Joshua Hunter, above, and Zachariah Rathwell, below, had been part of, made an emotional tribute to the pair



Two of the victims - University of Calgary business student Joshua Hunter and Alberta College of Art and Design student Zackariah Rathwell - were in a band together.

'Josh and Zack were happy-go-lucky guys. They could always put a smile on your face, and no matter what they always had a smile on their face as well,' Jordan Fabro, who knew the friends, told CBC News.



Heartbroken: The suspected killer's father, Inspector Douglas de Grood, is devastated by the attack

They had just been celebrating the release of their band's EP on Saturday. In a post on his Facebook page, Mr Hunter had written: 'That was hands down one of the best nights of my life.'

Their band, Zackariah & The Prophets, paid tribute to the pair on their Facebook page, saying: 'We didn't lose

two band mates, we lost two brothers.

'Their shining shenanigans and shining light will always be with us.'

The post added: 'ZATP is done, because the band was all four of us. Without all four of us the band doesn't exist. We love you all. And we loved them more than anything in the world.'

The University of Calgary paid tribute to the victims on Tuesday, as it confirmed that the alleged killer had been one of their graduates.

'This is a very shocking and tragic day for our students and our entire university family,' University president Elizabeth Cannon said.

'Our thoughts and condolences go out to the families of those who have lost their loved ones in this unimaginable and senseless tragedy.'

Police had been called to the rental home in the residential neighborhood of Brentwood at about 1.20am on Tuesday.



Devastated: The University of Calgary is mourning the loss of Kaitlin Perras, and the other victims



Police investigate a container in the driveway of the house in northwest Calgary



A police officer

assesses what is believed to be a cell phone at the scene on Tuesday

'Multiple witnesses' are currently being interviewed, police said as they confirmed the attack took place at a college party.

'The party had been going for several hours and there were a few dozen people there, it would be fair to say,' police spokeswoman Emma Poole told NBC News.

'We believe it was a college party because it was the last day of classes and the University of Calgary is just blocks away. Lots of students live in this area.'

Police investigate the scene of a multiple fatal stabbing in northwest Calgary, Alberta, Tuesday, April 15

CTV Calgary reported that was the University of Calgary student union's annual 'Bermuda Shorts Day' to mark the last day of classes.

Neighbors said the students who rent the house had been partying throughout the day without incident.



Doug Jones, who lives across the street from the house, says about a dozen students appeared to be having a barbecue in the backyard in the evening.

'It was like a normal gathering; it wasn't loud, it wasn't unruly,' he told the TV station.

'Around dusk, they moved inside, and then we didn't really hear anything.'

'We woke up this morning to yellow tape in the back alley here. I was in shock when the reporters told us what happened.'

Comments (47)

aquaticlove76, Sunnyvale, United States, 2 years ago

The parents must be devastated.

Floridian, USA, United States, 2 years ago

Knife killings are even more gruesome than shootings. My condolences to the families. And for Gods sakes, gun advocates, shut up. This isn't the time.

viceroy, Philadelphia, United States, 2 years ago

Had they just banned knives, this would have never happened!

rephic, Texas, United States, 2 years ago

When are people going to start paying attention to mass murders like this happening all over the world from these type of demographic areas?? This is a real problem, especially in the US and the UK!! Wake up people!!!

guysomewhere, great libertyland, 2 years ago

ban knives!

Master_Bates, minneapolis, United States, 2 years ago

Where are all the lib groups calling for the banning of knives?

markcardozo, New York City, United States, 2 years ago

Unlike most, I am not surprised that these incidents take place rather than there are not more

of them. Don't be surprised if it comes out that the killer was on SSRIs. The most important topic to discuss will be, of course, the most taboo; what did the parents do that damaged their son so much? What created such hate? For whatever reason we dare not offend the parents at any cost, not even to prevent future mass murders. So much for political correctness. Condolences to the families of the victims.

ic3030303030, somewhere in, Canada, 2 years ago

Condolences to all of the families. What a senseless tragedy.

priscilla, London, United Kingdom, 2 years ago

Canadians are always badgering Americans about gun violence but explain their fascination with knives.

Heliflyer, Greensboro NC, 2 years ago

Thank God they do not allow guns in Canada. - Shelbycobra, Springfield, 4/16/14 10:41 Yes! It is such a blessing that none of the five people he stabbed had a means to protect themselves and stop him! Had they done so, his self esteem may have suffered when he failed it kill all he planned.

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'They were all good kids': 2 bandmates among Calgary stabbing victims

2014/04/16

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radio one

Calgary stabbing victims identified as students, bandmates

Victims named as Joshua Hunter, Kaitlin Perras, Jordan Segura, Lawrence Hong and Zackariah Rathwell

CBC News Posted: Apr 15, 2014 7:14 PM MT Last Updated: Apr 16, 2014 7:20 AM MT



Details are emerging about the victims of what Calgary's police chief has called the city's worst mass murder.

Joshua Hunter, Kaitlin Perras, Jordan Segura, Lawrence Hong and Zackariah Rathwell were all stabbed to death at a house party celebrating the last day of classes at the University of Calgary.

"They were all good kids," said Rick Hanson, Calgary's chief of police.



He said at this point in the investigation it seems they were all innocent victims who did nothing to cause the violence.

"It was not caused by the actions of anyone at the party," said Hanson.

Matthew de Grood, 22, has been charged with first-degree murder in the deaths.

As of Tuesday evening, little was known about the victims.

Hunter, a University of Calgary business student, is from Priddis, Alta.

Rathwell went to the Alberta College of Art and Design.

"We are deeply saddened to hear of the passing of ACAD student Zackariah Rathwell. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family and friends," the school posted to Twitter on Tuesday



afternoon.

We are deeply saddened to hear of the passing of ACAD student Zackariah Rathwell. Our thoughts & prayers are with his family and friends.

— ACAD (@acadonline)
April 15, 2014



Jordan Segura is one of the five victims killed at a party celebrating the end of classes. (Facebook)

Hunter and Rathwell were members of the Calgary band Zackariah and the Prophets, which held its debut album release party Saturday.

CBC News is working to learn more about the other victims.

"It's just hard knowing that we lost five really great, young people," said U of C student Jordan Fabro, who knew four of the victims.



Josh Hunter, a University of Calgary business student, was one of five people killed in a mass stabbing at a small Calgary house party this week. His father says the family is 'in shock.' (Instagram)

"Josh and Zack were happy-go-lucky guys. They could always put a smile on your face, and no matter what they always had a smile on their face as well."

Earlier police had identified the victims as being a 22-year-old man, a 23-year-old woman from Calgary, two 23-year-old men from Calgary and a 27-year-old man from Calgary.

The identities of the victims will be officially released after autopsies are completed on Wednesday.

•

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Zackariah Rathwell, a student at the Alberta College of Art and Design, is one of five victims stabbed to death at a Calgary house party. (Facebook)



Pallbearers carry the casket to the funeral of Lawrence Hong, a victim of a mass stabbing on April 15 in Calgary.

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Near miss as capybara slips out of trap | Toronto Star

By Brennan Doherty Staff Reporter

thestar.com



thestar.com logo

Near miss as capybara slips out of trap

Volunteer searcher says he actually lured one of the missing rodents into a cage, but the door didn't shut.

Ben Lovatt says he almost trapped one of the High Park Zoo's missing capybaras on Wednesday night. (Lucas Oleniuk / Toronto Star)| Order this photo

A volunteer searcher who is trying to capture two escaped capybaras from the High Park Zoo says he actually got one into a cage trap last night—only to see it scamper away when trap failed.

"She tripped the trap, but the door couldn't shut completely and she fled out of it," said wildlife enthusiast Ben Lovatt.

Lovatt said onlookers who yelled and snapped photos of the cage were part of the problem.

"Our biggest challenge is no longer tracking the animal, it is just protecting it from the public," Lovatt said.

One capybara was spotted near High Park's southern edge around 10 p.m., Lovatt said, but fled towards the Queensway when someone started taking flash photos. He said he was able to herd it away from the roadway and back into the park.

"We were metres from a tragic ending to this part of the story," Lovatt said.

People have been looking for the two animals since they went missing from High Park, but more have been joining in since a confirmed sighting last Sunday, Lovatt said.

Capybara spotted twice in two nights, but park staff put off capture

City staff didn't join the hunt Wednesday, Lovatt said, because the capybaras were expected to lay low as the overnight temperature dropped to single digits.

"We're actually quite impressed by the dedication and work being done by the High Park officials, but tonight was most likely going to be a waste of their time," Lovatt said.

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Louisiana flooding sends caskets far and wide

By Chevel Johnson Associated Press
Posted: 05/06/2016 06:02:13 AM MDT

denverpost.com

THE DENVER POST

The Denver Post

Updated: 05/06/2016 06:32:34 AM MDT



Caskets float away from a nearby cemetery during flooding from heavy rains in... (Emily Dalfrey/AP)



Caskets float away from a nearby cemetery during flooding from heavy rains in... (Emily Dalfrey/AP)

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — Widespread flooding not only disrupts the living but sometimes also creates havoc for the dead.

That's what happened in southwest Louisiana's Calcasieu Parish when an overflowing Sabine River — helped by days of heavy rain — recently pushed water inland about four miles, disturbing graves buried in at least five cemeteries

in the towns of Vinton and Starks.

The parish Coroner's Office last month completed the recovery of caskets and vaults or lids that floated from their resting places during flooding March 12 and beyond. Charlie Hunter, a coroner's investigator, said the graves are typically surface vaults, meaning three-fourths of the vault is under ground with the lid only above ground.

"When water is over the top of the grave for extended periods of time, the pressure causes the grave to either pop the lid or float the entire vault," he said.

By comparison, the graves in New Orleans are above ground because the area is considered below sea level and would fill with water if crews dug too deep.

Officials said 88 caskets were recovered, most from Niblett's Bluff Cemetery in Vinton.

"There was catastrophic damage there," Hunter said.

The other cemeteries affected were Wimberly in Vinton; Doyle annex, Fountain and VFW all in Starks.

"Some of those vaults affected weighed 1,800 to 2,000 pounds and they were found 100 to 200 yards from the cemetery. People just don't understand the power of water," Hunter said.

Emily Dalfrey, who lived about 800 feet from Niblett's Bluff, said the graves of nine family members — including her great-grandmother — were disrupted there and she lost her home to the floodwaters.

"It's been very emotional," she said, a slight break in her voice. "But the coroner's office has been a tremendous help. They were out there, while the waters were still rising, tying off caskets that had floated away."

Hunter said because the area previously went through significant storms, like Hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Ike, the parish government had a plan in place to handle grave disturbances.

"We had a good heads up that this was coming, having gone through it before," Hunter said.

So crews were sent to several cemeteries in the projected flood area before the severe weather to

document and photograph where and how many graves might be affected.

"We were able to secure those caskets or vaults to fence posts and in other ways before they floated away," Hunter said. "We did the best we could to make sure they would not leave the cemeteries."

The remains that did get loose have been recovered and placed in refrigerated trucks parked at the coroner's office as investigators begin the identification and re-interment process.

"This has been heartbreaking," said Shannon Bellard-Amy, 38, of Lake Charles, who had relatives buried at Niblett's Bluff. "I know they're not there (in the grave) but in a sense they are because that's their final resting place. We came back the day after the water receded and it was like a bomb went off in that cemetery. The devastation was unreal. Vaults were everywhere but most devastating was that there were so many empty spaces."

Bellard-Amy had 10 relatives' graves disinterred.

"Thankfully, they've all been found and identified," she said. "It's been a long process but the coroner's office did a wonderful job. I hope they know how much they're appreciated."

Zeb Johnson, a retired investigator for the coroner's office who comes back when they need extra help, said they're working diligently, yet with care and compassion for family members.

"I'm always mindful of what William Gladstone said years ago. He was an English philosopher. He said, 'Show me the way a community cares for its dead and I will plot with mathematical exactness, the moral values of that community.' And I think that this is what we're seeing now in this community. These people lost their homes and they're belongings but they care for their dead and they're very concerned about getting their cemeteries back in shape and they're returning that respect to the people of this community," he said.

Cemetery Association President Tina Courville said they're urging families to re-bury remains deeper, at least 6 feet deep, when they are returned to their resting places. Courville has said graves at those levels were not disturbed. She also said the cemetery is considering changing its bylaws requiring new burials to be below the ground.

Questions remain about who will pay for the reburials.

Hunter said FEMA is involved and his office, along with the police jury, is working to come up with a workable option "We're encouraging families to file for personal assistance through FEMA which can help with the reburial process," he said. "This is going to take several months. It's not a simple process. It's going to take time."

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CAUTION TO THE READER

BEFORE reading the contents of this book,—

PLEASE NOTE.

- 1.—*That the narratives printed in these pages had better not be read by any one of tender years, of morbid excitability, or of excessively nervous temperament.*
- 2.—*That the latest students of the subject concur in the solemn warning addressed in the Sacred Writings to those who have dealings with familiar spirits, or who expose themselves to the horrible consequences of possession.*
- 3.—*That as the latent possibilities of our complex personality are so imperfectly understood, all experimenting in hypnotism, spiritualism, etc., excepting in the most careful and reverent spirit, by the most level-headed persons, had much better be avoided.*

THIS CAUTION is printed here at the suggestion of *Catholics, Theosophists, and Spiritualists*, who declare themselves to be profoundly convinced of its necessity.

WEEK IN WEIRD

Week In Weird



Home / Strange Phenomena / Mysteries / Was A Caveman Killed By A Chrononaut?

Was A Caveman

Killed By A Chrononaut?

Our internet is in a constant state of flux, old stories suddenly becoming new with lame-o redditors posting "MIND-BLOWN" as they 'fucking love science'. To be kinder, take Randall Munroe's philosophy of the 10,000.1

I TRY NOT TO MAKE FUN OF PEOPLE FOR ADMITTING THEY DON'T KNOW THINGS.

BECAUSE FOR EACH THING "EVERYONE KNOWS" BY THE TIME THEY'RE ADULTS, EVERY DAY THERE ARE, ON AVERAGE, 10,000 PEOPLE IN THE US HEARING ABOUT IT FOR THE FIRST TIME.

FRACTION WHO HAVE HEARD OF IT AT BIRTH = 0%

FRACTION WHO HAVE HEARD OF IT BY 30 ≈ 100%

US BIRTH RATE ≈ 4,000,000/year

NUMBER HEARING ABOUT IT FOR THE FIRST TIME ≈ 10,000/day

IF I MAKE FUN OF PEOPLE, I TRAIN THEM NOT TO TELL ME WHEN THEY HAVE THOSE MOMENTS. AND I MISS OUT ON THE FUN.

"DIET COKE AND MENTOS THING"? WHAT'S THAT?

OH MAN! COME ON, WE'RE GOING TO THE GROCERY STORE.

WHY?

YOU'RE ONE OF TODAY'S LUCKY 10,000.

Copyright Randall Munroe, used w/o permission.



broken_hill

Over at the Shields Gazette, Mike Hallowell tickles everyone's fortune fancy with the tale of the Broken Hill cranium.2

Nota bene: A skull is only a skull if it has its mandible, otherwise it's just a cranium. It's a *Homo rhodesiensis*, not *H. neanderthalensis* which haven't been found yet on the dark continent. Whether they're the same species, just with notionally different skull structure is another controversy altogether.

Anyway, the Broken Hill Cranium. On the left side of the skull, 'round the ear, is a 'perfect' circular hole. Since the wound lacks radial cracks, which would be caused by a slow missile like an arrow or spear, some fortune forensic experts speculate this could be a bullet wound. But where's the projectile?

Mainstream science, when it's not fucking loving itself, makes a case for the cause being an infection that eventually went septic, killing our ancestral cousin. The proof in their

pudding is the caveman's wound having shown signs of healing. Fair enough, but I'd be more comfortable if there were photos of similar abscesses in modern human skulls with 'perfect' proportions. Just spent a good 10-20 minutes browsing skull gore photos to no avail.



trep

Among those horrors were examples of ancient brain surgery. Known as trepanation, ancients (and our contemporaries) would carve holes into skulls to relieve pressure on the brain or release evil spirits. Sometimes the hole would be drilled into the skull, other times the skull would be scraped, and scraped, and scraped 'til the brain was exposed. The earliest known examples of trepanning are from Neolithic times, and if the Broken Hills cranium is an example of ancient surgery then our ancestors were far more clever than

archaeologists would dare propose.

I have several hypotheses regarding the Broken Hill 'bullet wound', which are similarly plausible. A stone near a campfire may have had an air pocket which expanded from the heat, causing the rock to explode. A little shard of stone would be easily overlooked by an investigator as insignificant, or unrelated, to their research.

This could be a case of a micrometeorite making a lucky strike on this poor troglodyte. It's highly unlikely that a single, pea-sized meteorite zipped through time and space just to ice a caveman. This particular stone may have been part of a meteor shower that peppered Rhodesia millions of moons ago. Evidence of similar events were uncovered in 2007 with mammoth tusks showing evidence of having been struck by micrometeorites.³



davey_and_goliath

Stranger still is the prospect this was caused by a human weapon, the humble sling. Best known for taking down Goliath, and smashing Mister Wilson's windows,⁴ ancient accounts would record astounding feats unparalleled 'til modern times and technologies caught up. Conventional science clocks a sling bullet travelling about 30 meters a second. At short range, it could cause a similar hole if the projectile was dense enough.⁵ Since cavemen regularly faced off with fearsome megafauna, they needed to

be smarter than the average cave bear to devise weapons capable of fending off, if not killing, these monsters.

What's your best guess? Submit your hypothesis for peer review on our Facebook page, at Twitter, or in the comments below!

1. <https://xkcd.com/1053/>
2. <http://www.shieldsgazette.com/opinion/columnists/wraithscape/was-neanderthal-shot-by-a-time-traveller-1-6786186>
3. <http://www.nature.com/news/2007/071212/full/news.2007.372.html>
4. Dennis the Menace reference, sound the geezer alert!
5. <http://slinging.org/index.php?page=the-ballistics-of-the-sling—thom-richardson>

Chris Savia

7 Comments

1. Ryan M.

08/17/2014 at 9:38 AM

Nigga got capped. Neanderthal drive by, ya dig?

2. TheBroker

08/17/2014 at 2:01 PM

Looking through the eye socket it appears as though theres a portion of skull missing directly across from the bullet...errr small hole. If thats the case that would eliminate micrometeorite and exploding rock as they would have different angles of exit. Trepanation would be out too, unless they got carried away and rubbed a hole clear through the guys brain. lol Only thing that makes sense to me is a bullet.

• Connie

02/09/2016 at 11:39 AM

Toownduch! That's a really cool way of putting it!

3. Schill McGuffin

08/17/2014 at 5:32 PM

The circumstances under which the cranium was found aren't clear, though it sounds like it wasn't unearthed under the utmost standards of paleontological care, even by 1922 standards. A bullet, whether from a gun or a sling, might easily have fallen out and been missed.

While archaeologists/paleontologists might be accustomed to seeing radial fractures when a puncture is caused by a low velocity weapon, I'd really like to hear from a forensic pathologist on this regarding whether such marks *always* occur. I suspect it may not be the case. I'd also be curious about *very* low-velocity punctures, such as might be

produced by the fang of a predator or scavenger.

Another possibility might be that the hole was drilled post-mortem by someone looking to string up the cranium, whether some ancient headhunter, or as part of some forgotten funerary ritual, or perhaps someone who discovered and made temporary use of the cranium in the millennia between its original owner's demise and its 20th century recovery.

4. not even wrong

08/18/2014 at 5:58 AM

What is to say that some jackass didn't put a bullet in the skull in more modern times? Do we know the circumstances on how it was discovered? People have a tendency to use anything for target practice, skull would make a great one.

- Austin

03/17/2016 at 2:17 AM

I wondered why this hadn't been mentioned. Not as exciting I suppose.

5. EC

08/18/2014 at 1:27 PM

Slingshot projectile? Like Goliath....

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Spooky Cemetery Flasher A Grave Concern

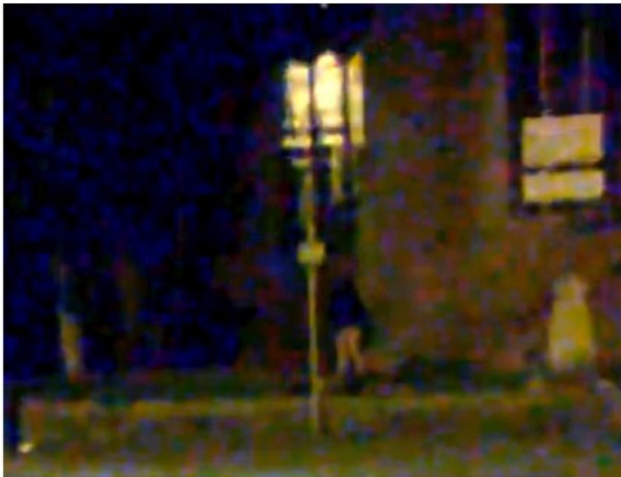
huffingtonpost.com

HUFFPOST WEIRD NEWS

One woman who has seen the man three times said: "I just want him to be caught."

06/06/2016 03:41 pm ET

- David Moyer Reporter, The Huffington Post



SWNS

The British city of Exeter has some grave concerns over a serial exposer who has been seen walking pantless near a local cemetery.

The cemetery flasher has been spotted roaming the town, including three times by the same woman, Sadie Ellicott.

"There's something very strange about him," she told South West News Service. "He's very creepy, and he looks back at you to make sure you are looking."

The last time it happened was June 4. Ellicott said this time she filmed the flasher and turned her footage over to police.

"I want to get the word out to warn other ladies who walk home on their own. I just want him to be caught."

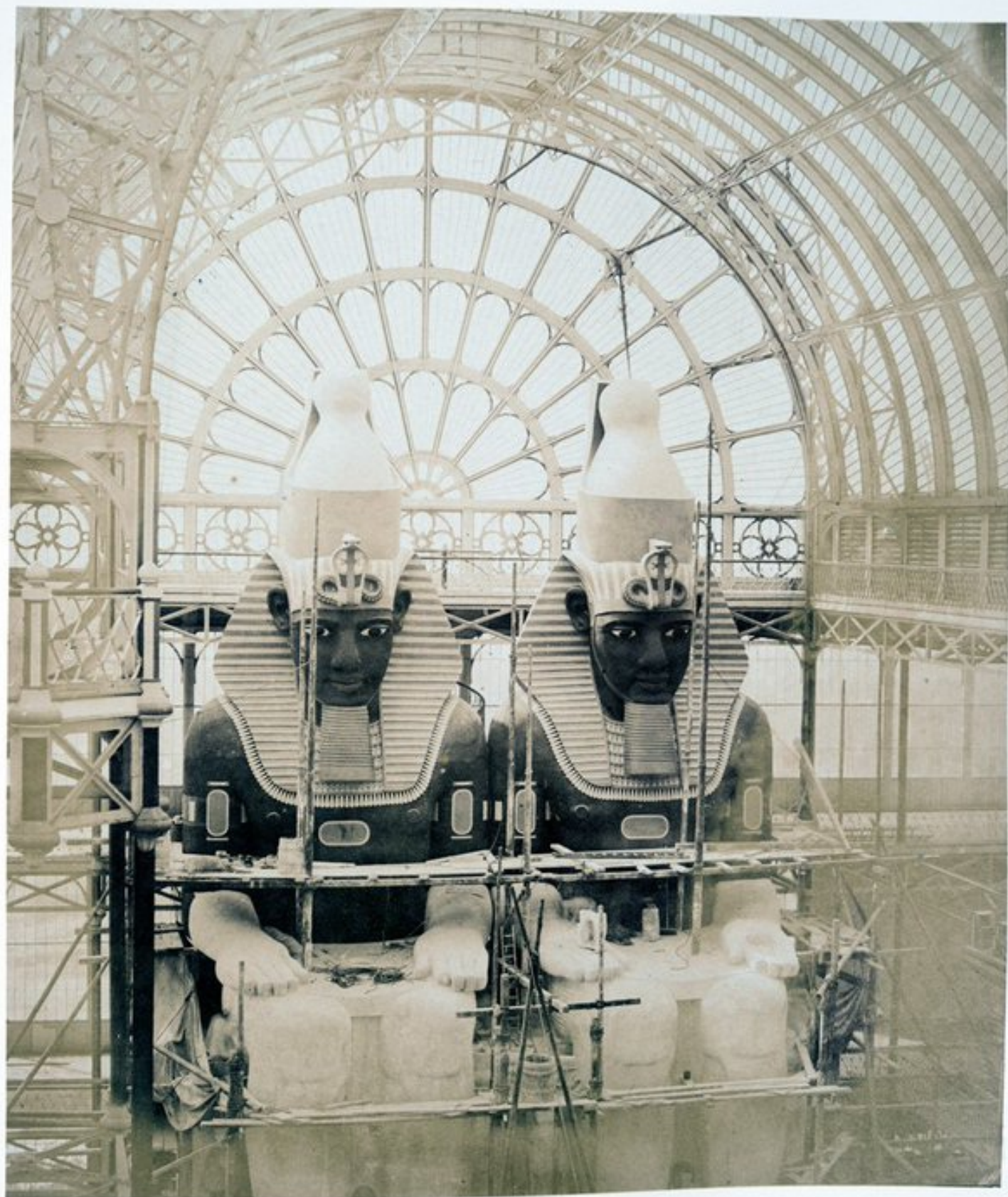
Although police arrived about 10 minutes after Ellicott's report, they were unable to find any suspects.

The suspect is described as a white male in his late 30s or early 40s, clean shaven, with dark hair and of medium to stocky build.

Ellicott said he wore a black hooded jacket and nothing else.

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REVEALED: Humans can be SAVED from fiery apocalypse by 'CHANGING Earth's orbit'

express.co.uk



Home of the Daily and Sunday Express
express_logo

REVEALED: Humans can be SAVED from fiery apocalypse by 'CHANGING Earth's orbit'

SCIENTISTS have developed a bold plan to save the Earth from a fiery apocalypse.

By Sean Martin

PUBLISHED: 17:18, Mon, May 9, 2016 | UPDATED: 17:33, Mon, May 9, 2016

The Earth will eventually become too hot for life

The Sun – which grows at a rate of 10 per cent every billion years – will continue to expand so much that it will eventually begin to heat up our planet to the point where it is uninhabitable.

Although this won't happen for another 500million years or so, scientists are already gearing up for the inevitable.

In a report titled 'How to Survive Doomsday', Columbia University astrophysicists Michael Hahn and Daniel Wolf Savin said moving Earth from its current orbit, in line with the Sun's expansion so that we always stay the same distance, might be the best option for us.

They propose that we fire a man-made asteroid into space to throw us off our path.

They write: "If we fired a 100km wide asteroid on an elliptical orbit that passed close to the Earth every 5,000 years, we could slowly gravitationally nudge the planet's orbit farther away from the sun, provided that we don't accidentally hit the Earth."

Alternatively, and perhaps the safer sounding option, would be to create a giant solar sail – which would have to be at least 20 times the diameter of Earth – that uses energy from the Sun to pull our planet slowly away from the expanding star.

The researchers continue: "Strategies like these could, in principle, keep the Earth in the habitable zone until the sun expands into a red giant."

Eventually, man may become machine

What the duo also suggests is that we upload our minds to computers and let future humans live as robots.

Although it's not possible to upload our minds to computers at the moment, company's such as Google have touted the middle of the current century when expertise in neurosciences will have advanced enough to do this.

They write: "We humans might simply decide to upload ourselves into machines, which would be relatively comfortable on the dystopic future Earth.

"This would require advanced computing resources and a deeper understanding of neuroscience than are currently available, but there is no known fundamental reason why we could not exchange our biological hardware for robotic replacements."

10 Comments
(edited)12 days ago

VoteOUT

We will be long gone before the sun becomes a red giant. Stop panicking.

(edited)25 days ago

Birdmaniw

And what happens when the sun collapses again?

(edited)12 days ago

VoteOUT

The sun is collapsing as a result of us voting Brexit in the future. Camoron DID warn us.

(edited)25 days ago

AJAX

Idiots.

(edited)25 days ago

TD3

Enough time for Middlesbrough to get into Europe ?

(edited)25 days ago

AJAX

lol

(edited)25 days ago

Drrdf

They need not worry, because many of the signs in the earth today correlate with Biblical prophecy concerned with the end days. It will not be so many years now before The Lord God takes His vengeance upon this sinful world which will not acknowledge and obey its creator. The intent of the present authorities to abolish money and replace it with a device without which no man will be able to buy or sell is a key sign.

(edited)25 days ago

Foulan

What utter rubbish! Apart from anything else, the sun will expand to reach Earth's orbit in 5,000 million years, not 500 million.

To suggest that scientists are "gearing up for the inevitable", something that won't happen for 5 billion years, is so absurd as to suggest that anything written by the author of this article should be treated with suspicion.

(edited)26 days ago

VoteOUT

Pathetic clickbait. Sack Martin along with A-U-S-T-I-N and R-A-O now.

(edited)26 days ago

AlHamilton

"Humans can be SAVED from fiery apocalypse by 'CHANGING Earth's orbit'"

Or, alternatively voting to remain in the EU?

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China denies selling dead human flesh in cans as FOOD in Africa

09:42, 20 May 2016 Updated 17:54, 20 May 2016 By Kirstie McCrum

mirror.co.uk



China dismisses reports of feeding Africa with HUMAN FLESH

China has strenuously denied reports that it's routinely canning human flesh and selling it as food to African nations.

A top official has dismissed reports in Zambia which queried the provenance of some 'meat products' being shipped from China to the African continent.

In the media reports, an unnamed Zambian woman living in China reportedly issued warnings to Africans not to eat corned beef.

She claimed that dead human bodies were being collected and marinated before being canned and labelled as corned beef for human consumption .



Getty

Chinese officials have demanded an investigation into the reports it claims are baseless

But the statement, issued by the Chinese Ambassador to Zambia, Yang Youming, blames people spreading "malicious" rumours.

China has robustly denied the accusations levelled online and in Zambian media

He told Chinese news agency Xinhua :

"Today a local tabloid newspaper is openly spreading a rumour, claiming that the Chinese use human meat to make corned beef and sell it to Africa.

"This is completely a malicious slandering and vilification which is absolutely unacceptable to us."

"We hereby express our utmost anger and the strongest condemnation over such an act."

The Facebook sharing of images of supposed human meat has been exposed as fake



Getty

A comprehensive investigation has been promised by the Zambian Deputy Defense Minister Christopher Mulenga.

He said: "The government of Zambia regrets the incident in view of the warm relations that exist between Zambia and China."

Some reports have been quoting workers in Chinese meat factories, who claim the measures began because there is limited burial space.



Getty

They said non-human meat was being sent to more powerful trade partners.

Shocking images, said to show human bodies being prepared for the process, have been exposed as fakes from a 2012 marketing stunt for the video game Resident Evil 6.

Mythbusting site Snopes reported that they were taken as a 'butcher shop' selling fake "human meat" which was set up at London's Smithfield Market.

The reports come just two months after China and Zambia signed a treaty cementing close ties between the countries.

Comments

OllieMollusc

Idiots

lambcPentamastr

Soylent green is people!

(edited)3 hours ago

AnthonyDagostino

They ruined this story by crediting snopes, a website created by a liberal couple, and can't be trusted. If this is how news media vets their stories, be careful what you read/watch from that organization.

RobertMoody

Yea, Snopes is NOT a credible source.

SnakePlisskenNY

Soylent Green -- now with more girls . . .

CarlBall

jimmy hoffa was ground up for dog food, if you did eat it you would never know as it tastes

like pork!

GergSteven

Chinese Food. Authentic.

djw663

Soylent Green.

CarlBall

i remember seeing that as a kid! for a month i only ate cereal. lol

AnthonyCavalea

What happens in China, stays in China.... Errr except for the tainted mystery meat, the crappy knock offs, the pollution, and bread filled with sawdust.

TerenceHowell

Dogs, People is anything sacred where money is concerned.

Yarp1yTwelve

Never eat anything from China. EVER! Don't drink their apple juice, eat their bread, ANYTHING. They grow food in soil contaminated with heavy metals, chemical, and other toxic waste and sale it abroad. Think about where that apple juice is coming from before you give it to your kids to drink.

DenisePharmer

PET FOOD TOO.....

SamAlbert

You want hot or spicy for #32?

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(Before Mr. Justice WILLES and a Common Jury.)

WILLIAMS V. DE VILBRAY.

This case was disposed of late on Tuesday evening. It was an action brought by the administratrix and representative of the firm of Williams and Sowerby, silk mercers, &c., of Oxford-street, to recover 52*l.* for silk dresses and other goods supplied to the defendant.

The pleas put upon the record in answer to the plaintiff's claim admitted the receipt of the goods, but alleged that they were sold for an immoral purpose,—namely, to enable the defendant to carry on the occupation of a prostitute.

Mr. Petersdorff was for the plaintiff; and Serjeant Parry and Mr. Joyce for the defendant.

The issue being upon the defendant,

Alga de Vilbray, the defendant, a tall, elegantly dressed Frenchwoman, was examined, and she stated that she had been in the habit of purchasing articles of dress at the establishment of the plaintiff, and always paid ready money for them. Upon one occasion, however, she saw Mr. Grant, the manager of the establishment, and he inquired whether she was not a gay woman, and she told him she was; and he then said that he thought she might get more friends if she dressed more expensively, and that she might have anything she required upon credit. He showed her some expensive dresses, and said that she would look like a queen in them, and at the same time told her that she should go to the Argyle-rooms and other places of a similar kind, and she would easily find a friend who would pay the bill. She stated that it was solely in consequence of this that she was induced to purchase the dresses, and she afterwards wore them in the pursuit of her vocation.

The defendant was cross-examined at some length by the learned counsel for the plaintiff, but nothing was elicited from her that at all tended to shake her testimony, and she persisted in declaring that the plaintiff's manager was perfectly well aware of her position at the time the goods were supplied, and that he induced her to purchase them under the circumstances she stated.

Mr. PETERSDORFF then addressed the jury for the defendant, and he called

Mr. Grant, the person referred to by the defendant, who stated that she was introduced to him by a Frenchman named Dorbas, who represented that she was a respectable married lady, and that her husband was abroad, and would not return for a fortnight, and that the arrangement was that half of the amount of the goods supplied was to be paid down, and the remainder when the husband returned. He stated that after the goods had been sent in an excuse was made for not paying what was agreed upon, and subsequently it appeared that the defendant never intended to pay, and therefore the present action was brought against her. He also positively declared that he had never made the suggestion she represented to her.

Mr. Justice WILLES explained to the jury the law in reference to a case of this description, and said that if they believed the evidence of the defendant she was entitled to a verdict, and the only question for them was which of the witnesses they considered entitled to credit.

The jury, after a short deliberation, returned a verdict for the defendant.

5 To Eliz: Bennett Blacksmiths Worke
done by her at Blenheim Castle in Woodstock
parke for the Service of his. G. D. March.

For. 1. 5. of Iron Works to a drugg at 4. ~~pl~~ 0. 11. 0

For. 25. of Ditto to a Grinstone at. 4. ~~pl~~ 0. 8. 4

For. 32. Sod. of Holdfask to y. joyners } 3. 4. 0
at. 2 ~~pl~~ Sod.

For making new Handles to 3. saws — 0. 3. 0

For mending a pump in y. Meadows — 0. 0. 6

Ent — 5 For Wedges and Plates up in y. Stair } 0. 10. 4
at y. Building is. 31. at. 4 ~~pl~~

4. 17. 2



Edward G. Loring



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the Lord
, 2016.
n May 17,
.C. She is
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and his
tt, Va.
in death



NOLAND, Mary Anne
Alfriend. Faced with the
prospect of voting for
either Donald Trump or
Hillary Clinton, Mary Anne
Noland of Richmond chose,
instead, to pass into the
eternal love of God on
Sunday, May 15, 2016, at



OMOH
"Bette" M
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Jr.; her par

AMUSING EVIDENCE IN ACTION BY CONJURER.

Some amusing evidence was given in West London County Court yesterday when an illusionist named Anar Natch Dutt, a man of colour, living in Shirley-road, Chiswick, was sued by John Wright Dewhurst, a mechanical engineer, for £84 4s. for goods supplied in connection with stage entertainments. The defendant counterclaimed for £195 18s., alleging loss sustained by the apparatus being defective and not delivered in accordance with the terms arranged.

Mr. G. R. Blanco White, counsel for the plaintiff, said that Mr. Dewhurst supplied the defendant with a number of up-to-date tricks which, after certain alterations, were delivered at Brixton for use at the Brixton Empress Theatre of Varieties. In one trick a woman was disclosed lying on a couch, and, after a covering had been placed over her, a man who was concealed beneath was projected into her place by means of a steel rod.

THE WATER TRICK.

Another illusion was a water trick in which a woman mysteriously took the place which a moment before had been filled by a vessel of water. This trick worked very successfully at Brixton, but the next week at Croydon the water was turned on to the young woman instead of into a second compartment and her clothes were soaked through. (Laughter.) In a third illusion, a tea-chest trick, a woman was again concealed. When the trick was put on at Croydon the young woman engaged was too bulky. She failed to get through a secret door and stuck fast. (Laughter.) These mishaps were not the fault of the apparatus.

The plaintiff said that the tea-chest trick would have worked properly at Croydon had not the woman in the box been too tubby. (Laughter.) The illusion was spoiled by her legs sticking up. (Loud laughter.)

Counsel: I will call one of the young ladies as a witness.

Judge Sir W. Selfe: The tubby one? (Laughter.)—Counsel: No.

A girl who had acted as assistant to the defendant said that when the box trick went wrong it was not the fault of the apparatus but of the young woman.

The Judge: Was she too tubby? (Laughter.)—The Witness: Chubby!

The Judge: Oh, chubby! (Laughter.)

Judgment was given for the plaintiff for £65 and costs on the claim, and for the plaintiff on the counterclaim also, but without costs.







THREE BLOOMERS IN TROUBLE.—*Jane Mordaunt, Harriet Davis, and Jannette Duval*, three girls under 18 years of age, who were dressed in the Bloomer costume, were charged with causing a disturbance and annoying the foot passengers in Regent-street. A police-constable of the C division stated that on Friday night, about twelve o'clock, while he was on duty in Regent-street, he saw the three prisoners, who were walking arm-in-arm, push against the foot passengers: he followed them, when they began singing and dancing to the tune of "Bobbing Around." They were surrounded by at least 300 persons, who seemed highly amused at their singular and indecent appearance. Mr. Beadon asked the prisoners what they had to say in answer to the charge, when the prisoner Mordaunt said, "We had been drinking with some gentlemen from the Argyll Rooms, and we were only having a little innocent amusement." Magistrate: Innocent amusement, indeed. If you want amusement you had better keep out of the streets, for such conduct will not be tolerated in the public streets at midnight. The officer said the prisoners were drunk. They were fined 5s. each, and when they left the court, they ran away in the direction of Regent-street, followed by nearly a thousand persons.

MARYLEBONE COUNTY COURT

appeared to be exceedingly busy manipulating the pockets of various gentlemen. He went up to the prisoners, who were the nearest to him, and desired them to be off. They then walked away to another part of the street, near to the entrance of the Rooms, and he there saw the prisoner Alexander cover Clark, while the latter tried a gentleman's pocket. Witness then went forward, and seized hold of Clark. Alexander thereupon became exceedingly bounceable, saying that Clark was his friend, and dared him to detain him. A constable at this moment came up and took them both into custody. Witness added that he came forward on public grounds alone to press this charge, as the street leading to the Rooms was always infested with pickpockets just as the company was leaving, and many losses had taken place in consequence. Joy 338 A, and Welch, the gaoler, having proved previous convictions against the prisoners they were remanded for a week.

My Mill grinds.



My Mill grinds
Pepper, and Spice,
Your Mill grinds
Rats, and Mice.

Field was with him. [The letter was put in. It complained that she was locked up, but that she intended to escape as soon as she had a chance. She concluded by asking Captain Berkeley's advice, "as a man of the world."] The morning after her mistress had sent her to bed—while Captain Berkeley was in the house—namely, on the 1st of September, she found her mistress's drawers on the sofa in the drawing-room.

Cross-examined—The petitioner and his wife used sometimes to quarrel about her being out late at night. He would ask where she had been, and she would turn round and abuse him. He never called her bad names before witness. Had told her that if any husband ever ill-used her she (witness) would take the poker to him or leave him; but did not say that with reference to Mr. Hensman's conduct. Told the charwoman what was going on at home. Thought it very improper. Was obliged to tell somebody. (Laughter.)

Walter Hensman, the younger son of the petitioner, once

MARYLEBONE.

THE MATHEMATICIAN AGAIN DISTURBED.—A young man, named *William Edwards*, living at 17, Adam-street West, Bryanston-square, attended by virtue of a summons which had been obtained against him by Mr. Charles Babbage, the celebrated mathematician, No. 1, Dorset-street, Manchester-square, to answer the offence of having unlawfully sounded and played upon a musical instrument, to the annoyance of him (complainant), and refusing to depart

when desired to do so, upon a reasonable cause being assigned.

Mr. Babbage said, on being sworn—On Saturday last, while engaged in my business, I was greatly disturbed by a band playing in Manchester-street. I went out and ordered them to desist, at the same time telling them that I was interrupted by them in my studies. They continued to play notwithstanding. I repeated my request several times to each of them, and as they would not cease I obtained the assistance of a constable, who succeeded in ascertaining the name and address of defendant, who seemed to be the chief of the party. At three and at six o'clock on the same day I was annoyed by other musicians.

Mr. Mansfield.—Is the defendant one who was playing upon either of the last occasions?

Mr. Babbage.—I cannot say that he is.

Mr. Mansfield.—What instrument was the defendant playing?

Mr. Babbage.—I do not know what instrument it was.

Defendant.—I own at once that I was playing. I have no wish at all to deny it. Did we (to Mr. Babbage) play more than one tune, which was "Beautiful star?"

Mr. Babbage.—I cannot say.

Defendant.—A foreign gentleman asked us to play, and we were a long distance from Mr. Babbage's residence; perhaps nearly 200 yards.

Mr. Phillips, chief clerk (to Mr. Babbage).—How far do you think they were from your house?

Mr. Babbage (after some hesitation).—I cannot tell; but I know that I was much disturbed by the noise.

Mr. Mansfield.—How long did they play after you told them to desist.

Mr. Babbage.—I cannot exactly say.

Defendant.—We did not play more than a minute or two, and it was only one tune. In fact, we didn't go quite through "Beautiful Star."

Mr. Mansfield.—Was there any incivility on the part of defendant.

Mr. Babbage.—No, sir.

Mr. Mansfield.—It cannot be tolerated that householders should be annoyed in this way. There are, no doubt, inhabitants in the immediate neighbourhood who encourage street musicians for the sole purpose of annoyance, and I must say, that I consider such a course of proceeding as being truly disgraceful to the parties concerned therein. I shall not, in this instance, inflict the maximum penalty of 40s., but fine the defendant 20s., and 2s. the cost of the summons.

Defendant.—It is impossible, your worship, for me to pay it.

Mr. Mansfield.—Then you will be committed for 14 days.

hede tyl þe herdyr be helyd þen taked elene and
ley a pone bynde hit fast so e lete hym stande by
saye vñ þe þe þe þe remenyt þe þe þe þe
hede ch hote þe þe d schane elene þe hede and
noynte þe hede ch fatte brop of oyrn fete þe ben
sodyn yn of þe suete þe of þe þe þe be hole
for þe þe yn aman hys wy

Take rede rosy. smale aliche becke þe vayne
vaydyn here effroye endyne sylfegrene
fedefynel telydon an qyt kassche ham elene
þe ley ham yn klyte þyne a day þe a mytli þen
stille ham yn a styllotorye þe fuste kacyr þe
by hys golde þe seende as solnyr þe as bame
for al maner of sore eyyn he hys good

for to make tye klyte

Take flosive of vye. salt. homy melle ham
kelt to gep þe þe frote kelt þe tye Snyry day
krys or m dtyr kassche ham þe elene kacyr
hit schal doe a day þe blackenye

for þe syngell þe þe callyd þe gurdyn

þe vñ an myl þe þe callyd syngell kedsa
yn þe maner of tyldefyre þe kelt þe prynge onte
vande as þe þe þe hit be kelypyth aman

hede tyl þe herdyr be helyd þen taked elene and
ley a pone bynde hit fast so e lete hym stande by
saye vñe þys chlen þe remenyt þys chassche lye
hede ch hote pyse d schane elene þe hede and a
noynte þe hede ch fatte brop of oryn fete þe ben
sodyn yn of þe suete þe of þe chalte be hole
for þe peple yn aman lye vñ

Take rede rosy. smale delie becke þe vayne
vaydyn here effroye endyne sylf grene
fedefynel telydon an qyt chassche ham elene
þe ley ham yn chlyte chyne a day þe a mytel þen
stille ham yn a styllcorpe þe furste chacyr ch
by lye golde þe seende as solnyr þe m as bame
for al maner of sore eyyn he lye good

for to make tye chlyte

Take flosive of vye. salt. homy melle ham
kelt to gep þe ch frote kelt þe tye Snyr day
chrys or m chyr chassche ham ch elene chacyr
hit schal doe a day þe blackenye

for þe syngett þe ya v chlyd þe gurdyn

þe vñ an myl þe ya chlyd syngett kedd
yn þe maner of chyldefyre ch chell þe yngge onte
vñde as per lye þe hit be ch chlypeth aman

[illegible]

WORSHIP-STREET.

Mr. Thomas Keddell Cleghorn, a merchant, residing at Navarino-terrace, Dalston, summoned the conductor of one of the company's omnibuses for unlawfully and wilfully misbehaving himself during his employment.

The complainant stated that on the 17th instant he got on the defendant's omnibus to proceed to Stamford-hill, and when he descended he was much surprised at being reprimanded by this man for the manner he got down. The defendant said, "You ought to know better than to get off an omnibus in that way." Complainant was thunderstruck at being told how he ought to dismount, and defendant told him he ought to step down, and not jump down upon his board. Upon that he had called the conductor an impudent fellow, and the conductor spoke to him in an impudent tone.

Mr. Beard, who appeared for the defendant, asked complainant whether he did not think that with his immense weight (between 12st. and 13st.) he was likely to damage the board?

Complainant said that his "immense weight," as it was called, taught him to do as he had done, and he told the conductor he should get off the omnibus in the manner most convenient to himself. He was extremely indignant at being called to order by a conductor.

Mr. Beard—Would it not have been safer to have stepped from the monkey-board than to have jumped with your immense weight on to the step below, a distance of two feet and a half?

Complainant—You mentioned my immense weight before; it is a sign you want something to talk about; your questions are nonsensical.

Mr. Beard—Your misbehaviour here to-day, sir, is an example of your probable manner to the conductor.

Mr. Mansfield—Have you any witness, sir?

Complainant—No, sir; I have been foreman of a grand jury twice in seven years, and consider a witness is in this case unnecessary.

Mr. Beard submitted for the defendant that he was perfectly justified in protecting his owner's property, by telling the complainant that he should not have jumped down upon the step. It was not long before that the step of one of the omnibuses had been broken in a similar manner. There was no evidence whatever to show that the conductor had misconducted himself, and he would call a witness to the man's character.

Thomas Morrison, the coachman of the omnibus, said he had been forty years on the road, and the conductor twenty years, and he was a remarkably civil, well-conducted man. In reference to this matter, he declared that there was such an immense shake to the omnibus when the complainant got down, that the pole gave one of his horse's teeth a knock, and he himself was nearly pitched off his seat.

Mr. Mansfield said he was at a loss to discover that any insulting language had been used, or that any misbehaviour had been shown on the part of the conductor. His opinion was that this proceeding against him was frivolous and inconsistent, therefore he should make an order that the complainant pay all the costs and the value of the time these men had lost.

Telford, Shropshire

Harsh but fair

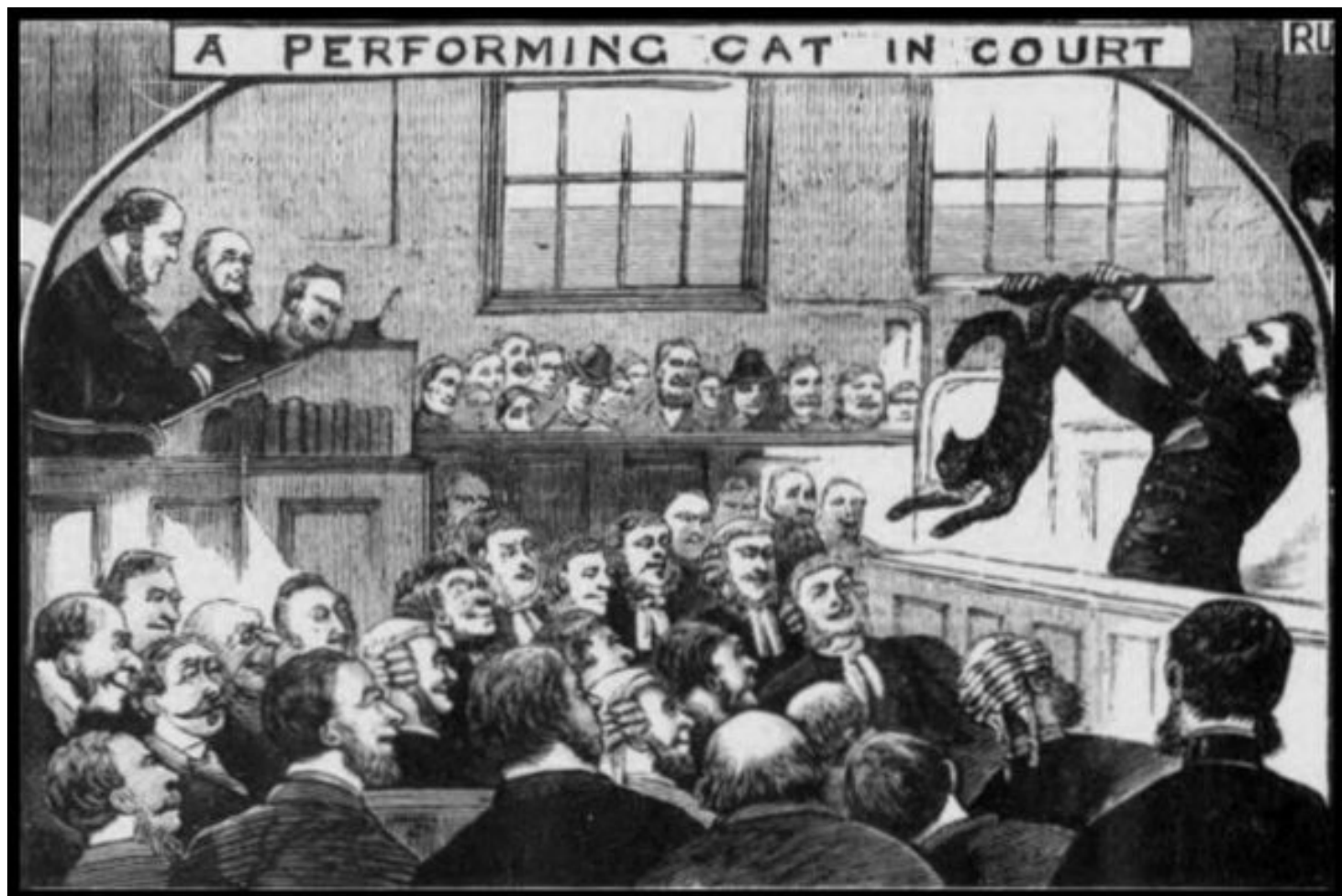
SIR – Major Robert Erith's memories of the late Major Eric Garbutt (Letters, May 20) remind me of my own training at the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst, in the late Eighties.

My platoon colour sergeant was an inspirational Coldstream Guardsman called David Gajda. On one particular barrack room inspection, he found a dead fly in my locker. This resulted in two punishment inspections: the first for having a pet, and the second for not feeding it.

Edward Hamilton-Russell
Bulmer, Suffolk

A PERFORMING CAT IN COURT

RU



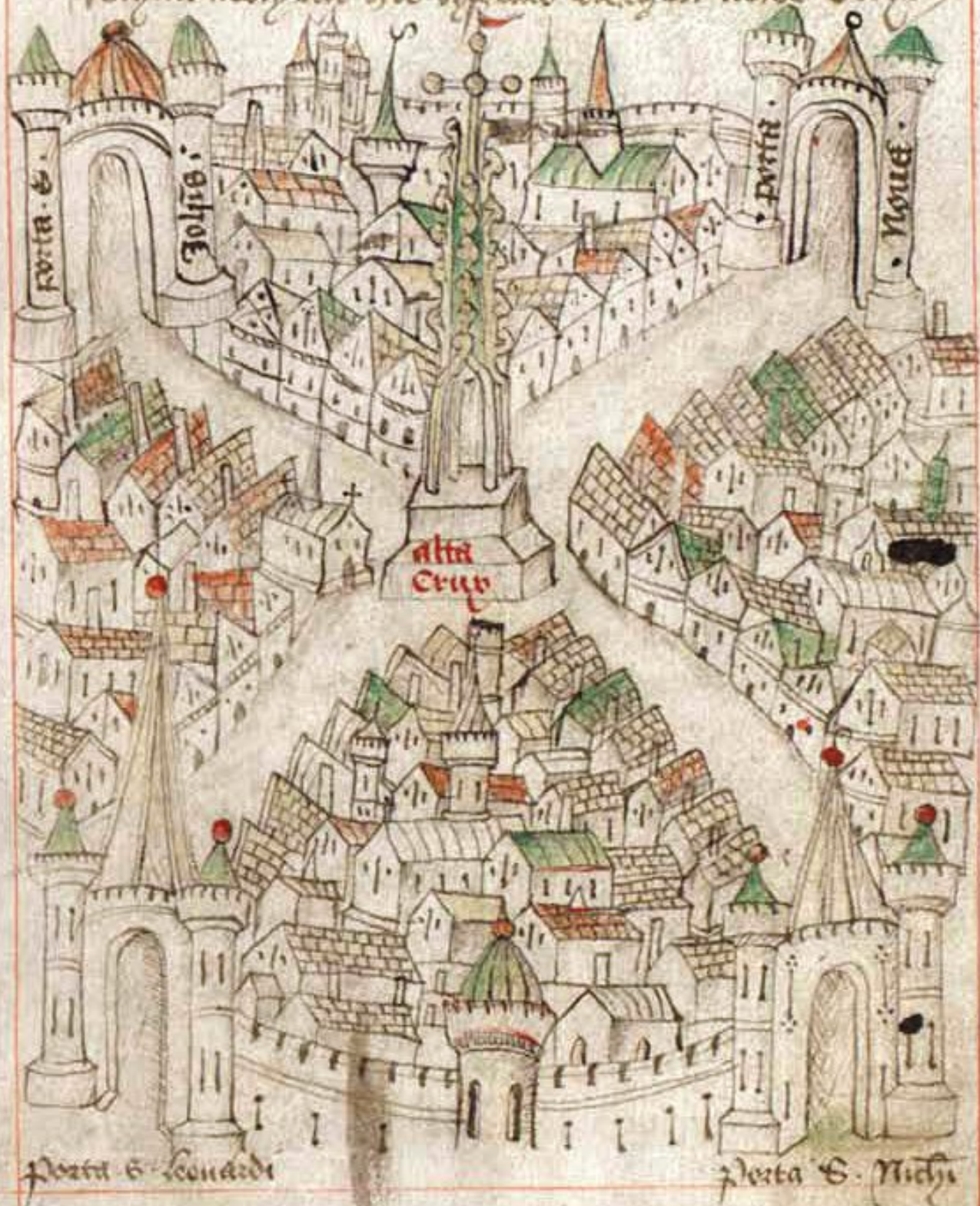
★★★★★ **A guy died in this movie and 2 other guys ...**

By [joey harris](#) on February 27, 2016

Verified Purchase

A guy died in this movie and 2 other guys played with his corpse. My children are still upset after watching this. They don't understand why 2 young men would want to flaunt around a dead body. My son asked me if we could dig up papa and play with him. I'm not sure what to tell them?

Sente Johnes gate Sente Leonardes gate And the newe
 gate And nomore was bilde not many yeres after
 And thence Prynce departed home owre see into his
 owne lordshipp of Burgoyne and there abode all his
 lyf And King Sellyne abode at Nether troye And
 bilde there a noble gate fast by the Watir of Tamys
 and callid it Sellyngesgate after his owne Name
 Feignid nobly all his lyf and lieth at nether Troye





WISDOM IN HUMBLE LIFE.

ON Summer nights when full and bright
The silver moon gives richest light,
Through tangled grass and bending brake,
In haste to reach a stream or lake,
O'er mossy stone and fallen tree,
The frogs come leaping fast and free
With IVORY SOAP to wash away
The stains received throughout the day.

Along the bank they sit in rows,
To scrub their limbs and bathe their toes.
Then dirt and stains at once depart,
As though dispersed by magic art;
The very spots that nature gave
Appear to leave them in the wave,
They look so handsome, clean, and white,
When rising from the water bright.

If your grocer does not keep the Ivory Soap, send six two-cent stamps, to pay the postage, to Procter & Gamble, Cincinnati, and they will send you *free* a large cake of IVORY SOAP.

The practice which prevails at weddings of throwing old shoes after the carriage which bears away the bride and bridegroom is no doubt from its antiquity deserving of veneration, but it may be carried too far, and indeed is at times not only inconvenient but dangerous. At the wedding of a Staffordshire clergyman which took place on Tuesday at Leamington a serious accident occurred, and the lives of three persons were nearly sacrificed by the observance of this time-honoured custom. It seems that as the bride and bridegroom were taking their departure after the wedding breakfast a volley of old shoes was discharged at them, with the addition of a quantity of rice. This evidence of kindly feeling, however highly appreciated by the newly married couple, was unfortunately misunderstood by the horse attached to the vehicle in which they were seated, who showed his disapproval by bolting. The consequences were not such as can be said to have added much to the happiness of the occasion. The driver was thrown from his box, and the carriage passed over him. The carriage itself came in collision with a cab, was capsized, and smashed to pieces. The bridegroom was pitched out of the window, received a severe scalp wound, and now lies in a precarious condition. The bride was of course terribly shaken, but happily escaped further injury. This sad affair will perhaps lead really kind-hearted people to devise some other means of displaying their good wishes for brides and bridegrooms than by pelting them with old shoes and other missiles.

UTOPIAE INSULAE FIGVRA



Image on Her Retina May Show Girl's Slayer

CHICAGO, Feb. 25.—A photograph of the slayer of Tracy Hollander, the Aurora girl clubbed to death with a grave stake in St. Nicholas Cemetery last week, has been taken from the eye of the murdered girl, according to a statement made today by State's Attorney W. J. Tyers.

The picture was taken at the suggestion of a local oculist, who told the police that the retina would show the last object within her vision before she became unconscious. The photograph is held by the accusers of Anthony Petras. It will be shown to the grand jury which meets Saturday.

few persons were present was because the theatres were not over. There were about 150 persons present. Some of the women were in tight-fitting clothes and others in low dresses. Several of the women were drunk, and when he left he noticed that all were more or less so. Police-sergeant Kerley, E Division, said he found about 250 persons in the hall; and saw women dressed in tights throwing their legs about disgracefully. He saw De Lara eject a woman who was acting improperly. He should say that the majority of the women there were prostitutes, in fact there was hardly a respectable woman present. He saw Belasco after 4 o'clock drinking at the bar. Replying to Mr. Williams, witness said he had visited the Argyll-rooms on business. He did not know whether the women he saw visited those rooms. Police-sergeant Pinnock, E Division, said the women were in fancy and theatrical dresses. One woman in tights attempted to balance herself with one leg on a man's back; she was drunk. Another woman fell on the floor, and as she did so threw her legs into the air. He saw another woman sitting astride of the balcony railing. Replying to Mr. Low, witness said he saw no drink supplied after 4 o'clock. At this stage Mr. Poland put in the special licence granted by Mr. Galsworthy for a ball to be held at the Cambridge-hall, and Dr. Parfitt produced his refreshment licence. Mr.

The LORD MAYOR said it was evident that considerable terror had been excited by the appearance of some man or men in the outlets of the metropolis, in disguise, and that a great deal of mischief might arise from a pantomimic display at night in retired and peaceful neighbourhoods; but he thought from the first that the grossest exaggerations must have been made in fun as well as in fright on such a subject, and he believed it to be quite impossible that there could be any foundation for the report that the ghost performed the feats of a devil upon earth, by clawing and tearing the flesh and clothes off poor people. He also withheld his credence from the statement that so many ladies had been frightened to death, although he had been given to understand, from authority which he could not question, that one of the female servants of a gentleman who resided near his house at Forest-hill, beyond Peckham, was a short time since terrified into fits by the sudden appearance of a figure clad in a bear's skin, which upon being drawn aside exhibited a human body in a suit of mail, and with a long horn, the emblem of the king of hell himself.

“There have been rumours in St. John's-wood and its neighbourhood for the last fortnight of the appearance of the monster alluded to in the police report of yesterday at the Mansion-house, inserted in *The Times* this morning.

“The bet is, however, understood to be of an even far more grave nature than is there stated, and, if it be true, amounts to murder. As far as the writer has been informed the bet is that the monster shall kill six women in some given time.

“It is asserted that he has been seen in St. John's-wood, clad in mail, and as a bear.

“January 9, 1838.”

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“It is asserted that he has been seen in St. John's-wood, clad in mail, and as a bear.

“January 9, 1838.”

“My Lord—On reading the letter in *The Chronicle* of this day, received by your lordship, I perceive that you are not inclined to give credence to the account furnished by your correspondent.

“The villian mentioned in it as appearing in the guise of a ghost, bear, and devil, has been within the last week or two repeatedly seen in Lewisham and Blackheath. So much, indeed, has he frightened the inhabitants of those peaceful districts, that women and children durst not stir out of their houses after dark.

“There ought to be a stop put to this ; but the police, I am afraid, are frightened at him also.

“I have the honour to be, your lordship's most
obedient servant, “J. C.”

Honore uoluntate in uoluntate





SCHUTZ-MARKE

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25 Originaltabletten
"BAYER"
enthaltend jede 0,0025 g.

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hydrochlor.**

Farbenfabriken
vorm.
FRIEDR. BAYER & CO.
LEVERKUSEN
a. COLOGNE/Rh.



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Is the most perfect ever invented, for charging Water, Wine, Ale, and other liquids, with pure carbonic acid gas. This elegant Apparatus is very simple in construction, and made in various sizes,—the smaller one being no larger than a decanter. The largest size is so arranged, that by the aid of ice, or the Patentee's Freezing mixture, any degree of cold may be produced. By this Apparatus, the purest Soda water may be obtained at the cost of less than One Farthing per glass; and so delicate is the operation, that it may be used in the Dining-Room.

By the aid of Syrups, Lemonade, Orangeade, Nectar, Ginger Beer, Champagne, Nectar, &c., may be instantly produced.

Dull Wine, Ale, &c., placed in the Apparatus, instead of water, will, in a few minutes, become as sparkling as Champagne.—in fact, as much so as if bottled twenty years. One trial will convince the most sceptical. Price 30s. and upwards.









Comment l'emperiere nerone

car iore et ouat son en comuue



Viellasse

hast aq
enmales de
enno resena
enel fia

Viellasse fut amez no frante

neute.

L . V I I

Wif þæt þu pænne 7 if he sie m̄ ðenlōpe obþeo of þū lime
wyrpta of þurpe 7 iustne 7 iust ððe daze do æges
hritto 7 broccifan lægo þlim obþæt pecta hatige
do of þone lægo þine þæt v̄ ð . L X .

Vyre gode ærfealpe hundh-tunge ni þe pærð 7
singne 7 sinfulle. tunhope. mo þo pærð. cele
þonian læf. 7 apleac. epopleac dooþin ððe ðe ced
pping þurh he pænneclad of þære læf standan. iiii.
niht ær þu hine ð do. Eft m̄ epopleac 7 sinfullan
7 enua hpon pings to 7 pping of þære hibi þonafel.

Dyre fælfæ pif ælf cenne 7 . L X I .
niht 7 singan 7 þā mannū þe ðo polmid hāmð. 7 eni
eo polume lan. þæt m̄ ð biþ of þurpe. elehtre .
æf þrota. beo lone. hape þurpe. hapan fprecel.
hæf þæt 7 æan pīran. epopleac. 7 apleac. hege pīran
corin. 7 yþurpe. finul. do þæt þurpe ðan fæf fæ
undh̄ peopod pings of þæt. viii. m̄ þan apyl on
butþian 7 oþceap þæt fīthpe do halizh̄ fælfæt þela
ð afeoh þurh elad. peop þæt þurpe ð yrn fīnde
pæt. 7 if m̄ hpiley fælfæt tung peop þæt obþæt ælf



utis dicit. **U**
tur celi mirabili
veritate tua in

Su alla alle
quator tu
ueri vadulle
cui tibi ginta
vnuma nra co
v tua nob vidi
semp iploret. **P**
dere iusti in dno
dext collaudato al

S dno in
btoz nra
ueri vadulle
daci deprecation
uerita sca q su
ad tue nob pro
placatiois aug

Qu scē poter
iugis In
lexisti iusti



A Clergyman out of Control. Portrait of a Bishop Around the Year 1000

by

HELMUT FLACHENECKER, Würzburg

The following short article is about actions of bishops and their interpretation as they are illustrated in the genre *Gesta episcoporum*.¹ Medieval contemporaries called this type of historiography about a bishop and his diocese by various names: *Chronicon*, *Historia*, *Vita*, *Gesta*, *Catalogus*, *Series episcoporum*. The outline that was used for this type of writing usually followed the chronological succession of the bishops. Ideally, the information about the bishops described their duties, be it their duties as pastor or secular ruler and warlord. This manner of religious historiography probably originates from the *Liber pontificalis*,² the original book of biographies about popes. The *Liber Pontificalis* was likely first compiled at the end of the 5th century and written down in the curial records starting in the year 520. The book of popes is structured in chronological order of their pontificates starting with Saint Peter.³ The *Liber pontificalis* influenced bishops chronicles, known as *Gestae episcoporum*, that can be found in Western and Central Europe between the 6th and 13th century.⁴ In 748, Paulus Diaconus wrote the first diocesan chronicle, the *Gesta episcoporum Mettensium*, North of the

¹ MARKUS MÜLLER, Die spätmittelalterliche Bistumsgeschichtsschreibung. Überlieferung und Entwicklung (Beihefte zum Archiv für Kulturgeschichte 44) 1998, p. 3.

² REINHOLD KAISER, Die *Gesta episcoporum* als Genus der Geschichtsschreibung, in: ANTON SCHARER, GEORG SCHEIBELREITER (Ed.), *Historiographie im frühen Mittelalter* (Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für österreichische Geschichtsforschung 32) 1994, p. 459–480. See also HELMUT FLACHENECKER, Kirchengeschichtsschreibung zwischen Liturgie und Statistik. Vom *Liber Pontificalis* zum Langzeitprojekt *Germania Sacra*, in: *Sborník Katolické teologické fakulty [Karlsuniversität Prag]* 5 (2003) p. 131–161.

³ *Lexikon des Mittelalters* 5 (1991) p. 1946–1947 (HARALD ZIMMERMANN).

⁴ A list of these *Gestae* for 6th to 13th century see MICHEL SOT, *Gesta episcoporum*, *Gesta Abbatum*, 1981, p. 41 [map].

Alps. His chronicle closely followed the example of the *Liber Pontificalis*. Despite all differences in terms of content, both historical sources have similarities in terms of structure and chronological order. In the *Gesta episcoporum Mettensium* chronicle, the bishops are sorted by numbers indicating the place in the succession of the first bishop. Furthermore, both sources often contain the diocesan foundation process described through hagiographical elements.

Occasionally, the chronicles include notes about cathedral and monastery buildings as well as the acquisition of relics, liturgical instruments, and books. The individual bishops were characterized by their standing with regard to King and Pope as well as in greater regard to their ability to acquire secular possessions. This demonstrates that the bishops chronicles possessed a practical as well as an administrative component. In most cases, cathedral chapters ordered the redaction of bishops chronicles. In the broader sense bishops chronicles are part of the administrative records of a cathedral. They include certificates for recording goods, rights, and claims that stood as secondary insurance in addition to the original documents. Moreover, the *Gestae episcoporum* wanted to strengthen the remembrance or *memoria* of the bishops and were used in the liturgy of Mass. In this context, they occasionally included prayers but almost always references to commemorate the deceased bishops.

In many dioceses, canonized bishops became patron saints. Unfortunately, this topic can only be briefly addressed in this lecture.⁵ The canonized bishops competed in reputation with patron saints like the Virgin Mary and the apostles Saint Peter and Paul as well as Saint Stephen, the first Christian martyr. Beginning in the Early Middle Ages, people in a given diocese began to venerate their first deceased bishops as saints – side by side with the common cathedral saints. Especially diocesan patron saints did not have to be identical with the first bishops, for instance Bishop Ulrich of Augsburg or Bishop Wolfgang of Regensburg (Ratisbon).⁶

The canonization of bishops reached its peak during the early and High Middle Ages. In the Late Middle Ages, bishops were no longer canonized in

⁵ HELMUT FLACHENECKER, Heilige Bischöfe als einheitsstiftende Klammer für mittelalterliche Diözesen, in: *Römische Quartalschrift* 97 (2002) p. 194–214.

⁶ AUGUST LEIDL (Ed.), *Bistumspatrone in Deutschland*. Festschrift für Jakob Torsy, 1984.

the Empire. This was probably due to the fact that the contemporary perception of bishops had changed. Bishops were seen as princes of the Holy Roman Empire and had the primary goal of expanding and securing their secular prince-bishoprics, meaning the secular possessions of their cathedral.⁷

The following example describes Bishop Megingaud of Eichstaett (991–1014/1015)⁸ who was anything but holy. Megingaud was bishop of the Diocese of Eichstaett which canonically belonged to the Archdiocese of Mainz and was located between Franconia and the Duchy of Bavaria. The biography of Bishop Megingaud in the *De Gestis Episcoporum Eistetensium* contains a unique description of him. The biography was composed by an unknown writer from the monastery of Herrieden, a town in South-Western Franconia⁹ around the year 1078. However the bishops chronicles as a whole were never fully completed.¹⁰ The biographies of bishops like the *Pontifikale Gundekarianum*,¹¹ a liturgical book by Bishop Gundekar of Eichstaett, including instructions and texts about Catholic rituals that are performed or guided by a bishop, served the purpose of self-insurance (self-affirmation) for the Church of Eichstaett in the troubled times of the Investiture Controversy. The unknown author of the Bishop Megingaud biography dedicated his work to his friend, a canon of the Cathedral called ‚G.‘ (only the first letter is mentioned!) from Wuerzburg. The author himself belonged to the Cathedral Chapter of Eichstaett and was episcopal chaplain. In this role he was a close confidant of Bishop Gundekar II (1057–1075).¹²

Bishop Megingaud was descended from a noble family and was related to the Roman Emperor Henry II. For this reason, during assemblies at the royal

⁷ ODILO ENGELS, Der Reichsbischof (10. und 11. Jahrhundert), in: PETER BERGLAR, ODILO ENGELS (Ed.), *Der Bischof in seiner Zeit. Bischofstypus und Bischofsideal im Spiegel der Kölner Kirche. Festgabe für Joseph Kardinal Höffner, Erzbischof von Köln*, 1986, p. 41–94.

⁸ About his activities see ALFRED WENDEHORST, *Das Bistum Eichstätt 1. Die Bischofsreihe bis 1535* (Germania Sacra N. F. 45) 2006, p. 48–51.

⁹ STEFAN WEINFURTER, *Die Geschichte der Eichstätt Bischöfe des Anonymus Haserensis. Edition – Übersetzung – Kommentar* (Eichstätt Studien N. F. 24) 1987.

¹⁰ A biography about empress Agnes is only annouced.

¹¹ The manuscript is produced during the reign of bishop Gundekar II: ANDREAS BAUCH, ERNST REITER (Eds.), *Das Pontifikale Gundekarianum. Facsimile und Kommentarband*, 1987. – STEFAN WEINFURTER, *Sancta Aureatensis Ecclesia. Zur Geschichte Eichstatts in ottonisch-salischen Zeit*, in *Zeitschrift für bayerische Landesgeschichte* 49 (1986) p. 3–40. here p. 4 [reprint: STEFAN WEINFURTER, *Eichstätt im Mittelalter. Kloster – Bistum – Fürstentum*, 2010, p. 53–92].

¹² Vgl. WEINFURTER, *Anonymus* (like note 9) p. 24–27. – ANDREAS BAUCH, *Gundekar II., Bischof von Eichstätt*, in: *Fränkische Lebensbilder* 6 (1975) p. 1–29.

court, he did not rise from his seat when the Emperor entered the room like the other bishops. Bishop Megingaud justified his odd behaviour – according to the text – with the following statement: „I am the older relative and both the writings of pagans and those of the Church demand that the elderly have to be honoured.“¹³ The author of Megingaud’s biography describes him as poorly educated, strict and sometimes even hot-tempered. In his writing, he sympathizes with Megingaud because of two main points that far outweigh the bishop’s bizarre traits: Firstly, his straightforwardness; the author clearly differentiates Bishop Megingaud from the other church reformers at the end of the 11th century, whom he blames for being ambivalent. Secondly, his uncompromising attitude; Megingaud refused to cede territory of the Eichstaett diocese to the diocese of Bamberg, newly founded in 1007.

During the time of the southern expansion of the diocese of Bamberg, Bishop Megingaud stood up to Emperor Henry II. The anonymous writer states: „... only our fighter from God (= Bishop Megingaud) rooted in his character traits and his origin, stood firm against him and did not want to accept this disadvantageous (territorial) exchange until the end of his life.“¹⁴ However, it seems that the diocese of Eichstaett did not put up resistance from the start. Bishop Megingaud signed the synod resolutions of Frankfurt that confirmed the foundation of the diocese of Bamberg canonically as well as with the corresponding legal provisions of the Empire.¹⁵ Therefore, it is possible that Emperor Henry II did not target Eichstaett’s territory until a later point in time. Maybe he started aiming for it in 1009 when the towns Velden and Kemnath as well as Hersbruck were given to the diocese of Bamberg in 1011. Not until Megingaud’s successor Gundekar became bishop in 1016, the territory between the rivers Pegnitz and Schwabach were annexed to the diocese of Bamberg.¹⁶ Prior to becoming bishop, Gundekar was cathedral curator in Bamberg and therefore a confidant of Emperor Henry II. The anonymous writer of Herrieden defames Gundekar because of his supposedly low social standing, but does not conceal that Gundekar – under the influence

¹³ WEINFURTER, Anonymus (like note 9) cap. 24, p. 54.

¹⁴ WEINFURTER, Anonymus (like note 9) cap. 25, p. 54.

¹⁵ FRANZ MACHILEK, Das Protokoll der Frankfurter Synode vom 1. November 1007 und die Errichtung des Bistums Bamberg, in: JOSEF URBAN (Ed.), Das Bistum Bamberg um 1007. Festgabe zum Millennium (Studien zur Bamberger Bistumsgeschichte 3), 2006, p. 16–44.

¹⁶ FRANZ HEIDINGSFELDER, Die Regesten der Bischöfe von Eichstätt, 1915–1938 nr. 155.

of his new chaplains and counsellors – resisted the royal requests for territory, if only for a while.

The following details known about Bishop Megingaud are not known about any other bishop during that time. For example: Bishop Megingaud was a proponent of short Masses and long feasts. A canon with the name Vastolf had to change his name, since his name (F)Vast-olf (= fast) reminded Megingaud too much of fasting. At the canon's confirmation, he renamed him in Ezz(Eat)-olf [The prefix means eating!].¹⁷ In general, the bishop did not like Lent very much since he found it unbearably long. On the Sundays during Lent, the Bishop had servants put up a big fish¹⁸ in the cathedral choir, so that the canons would sing faster due to the seductive sight of the fish. In turn that enabled him to have lunch even sooner. Furthermore, Megingaud changed the Terce, or Third Hour, at 9 am to the None, or Ninth Hour, at 3 pm and „went to eat immediately“. He was unusually quick at consecrating oil and churches, and only used a few liturgical words when it came to the ordination of priests. Older priests that still knew Megingaud told the unknown author that some of them were ordained in the Forest of Weißenburg. This is due to the fact that Megingaud was hunting in the forest and found a few minutes for their ordination.¹⁹ The Bishop was a master in swearing as well. The source tells us about Megingaud's cursing: „When he travelled to Rome, prior to this he wanted to receive absolution for his sins from the canons of Eichstaett cathedral, he asked them for forgiveness of a hundred curses in advance. After he had promptly used up all hundred ‚excused/forgiven‘ curses, he sent a messenger back to Eichstaett to ask for more dispensation. But again he exceeded them in number and degree.“

Even Saint Willibald had to intervene in person and warn Megingaud in a prayer not to treat his people in such a harsh way. The bishop promised to change „and calmed down at least in a certain way.“ Megingaud whipped a royal representative who claimed to not carry any supplies with him. However, this statement turned out to be a lie. After this, the Bishop appeased the representative whose honour had been violated by giving him a marten fur. Similar things happened to a younger clergyman who was sent to Eichstaett on behalf of the Bishop of Wuerzburg. The clergyman had a gyrfalcon that

¹⁷ WEINFURTER, Anonymus (like note 9) cap. 16, p. 50.

¹⁸ The fish ‚Hausen‘ belonged to the family of sturgeons.

¹⁹ WEINFURTER, Anonymus (like note 9) cap. 18, p. 50–51.

Megingaud badly wanted to have. In a dishonest operation he tricked the clergyman into giving him the falcon and rewarded the betrayed man with money. This example, which is only mentioned in passing, provides us with insight into the nobility's passion for hunting. Hunting with falcons held great significance. The Bishop of Eichstaett and the Bishop of Wuerzburg „maintained, by the way, a close and cordial relationship due to regular gift exchanges. Our bishop (Bishop Megingaud) sent big fishes [*husos*], also known as sturgeons, silky coats and fine fabrics with which he was blessed in a plentitude. In turn the other gave the best wines of which he possessed a massive collection and our ruler did not.“ The anonymous writer of Herrieden also describes the Bishop of Wuerzburg²⁰ in his anecdotal writings using coarse speech. During the yearly delivery of wine, ahead of the actual wagon carrying the wine, the Bishop of Wuerzburg sent a courier who threw bags filled with grape must to Megingauds feet. Since Megingaud had already sent his gifts to Wuerzburg, he was very upset about this feigned affront and yelled at the courier: „You rascal! Your Lord did not deserve my noble gifts The foolish Emperor did not know what he was doing when he bestowed upon him such an important diocese.“ Not until the courier managed to explain the joke and Megingaud was convinced that the barrels of wine were about to come, he did switch from cursing to praise: „May the Lord God bless my dearest friend and his gifts! In fact, he is a real asset/ornament in the line of bishops from Wuerzburg. The wise Emperor could never have given the noblest diocese to anyone other than him.“

As with any other handed down stories, it is difficult to tell how much of its content actually reflects the truth. However, the image of Megingaud as a hot-tempered, rough and pleasure-seeking nobleman remains – a man who pursued his own beliefs/opinions in a direct way as the head of the diocese of Eichstaett. Piety and pastoral care clearly were of secondary importance. No thoughts on asceticism and prayers are mentioned in the biography.

In 995, Duke Henry of Bavaria gave Bishop Megingaud the abbey of Niederaltaich. He wanted Megingaud to reform the monks. Nonetheless, it was not long before the Duke saw the consequences of his misjudgement. On December 27, 996, the Duke gave the abbey of Niederaltaich to Godehard

²⁰ The bishop must be Bishop Henry Ist: See ALFRED WENDEHORST, in: *Fränkische Lebensbilder* 17 (1998), p. 1–8.

who was a reformist and later became Bishop of Hildesheim.²¹ Megingaud was not a good fit for implementing monastic reform.

Even Emperor Henry II faced difficulties with Megingaud's straightforwardness. This is exemplified not only by the expansion of the diocese of Bamberg, but also by the payment of tributes (*Taxae pro communibus servitiis*) to the Emperor. „Once Emperor Henry ... wanted to host a festive event for himself and others, he ordered our bishop ... to bring him a vast amount of tributes on his way to Regensburg (Ratisbon) that would have terrified even an archbishop. When the royal courier told him in detail the tributes that he needed to deliver to the King and mentioned at the end a massive number of barrels of wine, Megingaud yelled: You rascal, your ruler clearly must have lost his mind!“ The Bishop refused to pay the required tributes. After he had calmed down a little, he sent some fine fabrics made in Eichstaett. On a side note, this incident demonstrates that a ruler was able to request tributes from bishops even if he was not in the corresponding diocese. And the amount of tributes was not fixed but rather determined by royal needs.²²

Although the unknown author sympathized with Bishop Megingaud, he only began to criticize his passion of hunting towards the end of his long remarks. This passion induced him to exchange land near Eichstaett for hunting grounds far away (in Stoettera) close to the Hungarian border. The author states the following in the biography: „All bishops who followed him did not draw so much as half a penny's value from his hunting (area).“²³ This criticism is closely connected with the efforts of the cathedral chapter to keep the possessions of the Church of Eichstaett together. For this reason, diocesan possessions in the neighbouring area of the so-called ‚Noerdlinger Ries‘ were much more attractive than possessions in far away Austria. Stoettera is located between Wiener Neustadt (Vienna New Town) and Lake Neusiedl. Even in 1456, the church in a village called Marz, which is located south of Stoettera, was still dedicated to Saint Willibald. This suggests former possessions of Eichstaett.²⁴

²¹ HEIDINGSFELDER, *Regesten* (like note 16) nr. 145.

²² See CARLRICHARD BRÜHL, *Fodrum, gestum, servitium regis* 1, p. 209.

²³ WEINFURTER, *Anonymus* (like note 9) cap. 16–25, p. 78–84.

²⁴ KARL LECHNER, *Die Babenberger*, ³1985, p. 319 note 18.

The diocese of Eichstaett possessed territories in the Bavarian Ostmark (Eastern march; which today belongs to Austria). These possessions came from the holdings of the monastery of Herrieden, which was annexed to Eichstaett cathedral's chapter in 888. Once again: The unknown author originates from said monastery. Similar to other dioceses, the kings of the 9th through the 11th century included the diocese of Eichstaett in the border security ventures in the southeast. An important base was the Austrian spot of Melk. During Megingaud's time as Bishop, there was a proprietary church of the diocese of Eichstaett in Melk that was dedicated to Saint Peter. According to certain sources, a vassal/liege man from Eichstaett, Margrave Henry, possibly resided in Melk. During the Investiture Controversy, Eichstaett likely lost its possessions in Melk.²⁵ Taken in this context, the following note in the biography about Bishop Megingaud gains credence: On October 13th, 1014, Bishop Megingaud buried the mortal remains of the Irish Colomann, who had suffered martyrdom close to Stockerau in 1012, in Melk after a festive relic translation.²⁶ However, in 1017, Thietmar Bishop of Merseburg reported that the residents of the border area between Bavaria and Moravia caught a *peregrinus Colomannus*, a foreigner named Colomann, and hanged him as a spy. The tree on which Colomann died soon began to bloom.²⁷ But this description cannot be approved, because there is no documentation about Colomann's veneration as a saint until 1156/57. In 1170, there is evidence that an altar in the church of Melk was dedicated to him.

Lastly, during the rule of Bishop Megingaud, the first coins were minted in Eichstaett.²⁸ Henry II initiated the minting of coins, first as Bavarian Duke and later as Roman Emperor. Apart from this, the relationship between the Bishop and the Emperor was rather tense despite the fact that they were related. Neither Megingaud's visits at the Royal Court, nor Henry II's visits are documented by the sources. However, in 1001/1002 Bishop Megingaud participated in an expedition to Italy together with Emperor Otto III, Henry's predecessor.

²⁵ LECHNER, Babenberger (like note 24) p. 63; ERNST KLEBEL, Eichstaett und Herrieden im Osten, in: ERNST KLEBEL, Probleme der bayerischen Verfassungsgeschichte (Schriftenreihe zur Bayerischen Landesgeschichte 57) p. 332–340.

²⁶ Annales Mellicenses 1014: *Hoc anno sanctus Cholomannus a Megingaudo Heibstatensi episcopo Mediliccha sepultus est*, in: MGH SS 9 (1851), p. 497. See HEIDINGSFELDER, Regesten (like note 16) nr. 150.

²⁷ Thietmar, Chronicon VII, 54, in: MGH SS 3 (1839), p. 860.

²⁸ HEIDINGSFELDER, Regesten (like note 16) nr. 151.

Bishop Megingaud was an interesting character. He was peculiar and critical of the Emperor. He made no secret of his noble descend and had a correspondingly noble lifestyle even during his time as Bishop. He went hunting, loved big feasts, and was addicted to splendour. He paid closer attention to the secular forms of governance than to his tasks as pastor. The festive transition and canonization of Colomann in far away Austria remains a side note. Instead, in January of 1002, Megingaud obtained the territorial rights of a forest that was important for the church of Eichstaett and thereby strengthened the seigniorial rights of his church.²⁹ Megingaud was integrated in the constant prayer of the Church of Salzburg and the Tegernsee monastery.³⁰ Therefore, it cannot be said that Megingaud was unchristian. He knew the established forms of the common prayers at that time and made use of them. It can only be speculated as to whether Megingaud was a non-standard Bishop due to his noble descent or whether this was the standard. In order to shed more light on this issue further comparable studies would be necessary. Until that time, the *vita* (biography) of Megingaud shall remain unique. It is certain that he did not conform to the ideal image of a holy bishop.

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²⁹ MGH D Otto III (1893) nr. 424 (1002 January 11); HEIDINGSFELDER, *Regesten* (like note 16) nr. 146.

³⁰ HEIDINGSFELDER, *Regesten* (like note 16) nr. 152.

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Connecticut's Haunted Fairy Village

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<http://newenglandfolklore.blogspot.com/2016/06/connecticut.html>

June 07, 2016

Here's a nice creepy story. Not every fairy tale has a happy ending...

Once upon a time, in the early 1900s, a woman and her husband built themselves a stone house in Middlebury, Connecticut. They liked peace and quiet, so they built it out in the woods.

Things went well in their new house for a while, but after a few months the wife became strangely agitated whenever she left home.

One day when they were walking back from town she grabbed her husband's arm. "Can you hear them?" she asked her husband.

"Hear what?" he said.

"Them. The little people in the woods," she said. "I think they're talking to me. I've heard them for weeks now..."

"My love, perhaps you need to rest. I only hear leaves blowing in the wind."

His wife rested, but it did nothing to cure her of the idea that fairies in the woods were talking to her. "They want something from me," she said, "but I don't know what it is. I'm scared they'll come into our house..."

Her husband didn't believe in fairies, but he loved his wife, so at her request he put bars on their windows to keep out the fairies.

One night after they had gone to bed the woman turned to her husband and said, "I know what they want from me. They don't want to hurt us, they just want houses like we have. They want a home like we have. They want us to build them a village!"



From Roadtrippers.com.

In the moonlight the man could see the manic gleam in his wife's eyes, but he loved her, so the next day he set to work building small houses in the woods. Under his wife's direction he built dozens of tiny structures out of stone, brick and shingles.

When the last house was finished his wife clapped with delight. "Now the only thing left to make is the throne," she said.

"A throne? For who?"

"For me. Because I'm going to be the Queen of the Fairies!"

The husband rolled his eyes, but he had already put bars on the windows and built a tiny village, so what was one more concession to his wife's madness? After all, he did love her.

Using a pick-axe he carved a gully into one of the rocky hills, and mortared the stones into a throne. It took him all day, and when it was done he called his wife out to see his handiwork.



From this site about haunted Connecticut.

Exhausted, he sat down on the throne. "What do you think, my love?"

A look of rage came over his wife's face. "What do I think?!" she screamed.

Her husband cowered. "My dear, what's wrong..."

"What do I think?!" She grabbed the pick-axe. "I think you need to get off my throne! I'm the Queen of the Fairies, not you!"

And with that she swung the pick-axe and split her husband's head in two.

The fairy voices suddenly went silent. For months they had been whispering, chattering, singing to her, and now they were gone. Aghast at what she had done and howling with grief, she ran to their house and hanged herself.

Isn't that a great, gruesome story? There is also another version where the husband finally can't take it anymore and kills his wife, but either way it doesn't end well for this poor couple.

The story is told to explain one of the weirder places in Connecticut: the Little People's Village in Middlebury.

The Little People's Village consists of remains of multiple stone structures located out in the woods. There's a house-sized building with bars on the windows, there are the remains of many miniature buildings, and there is also something that looks suspiciously like a throne.

According to local folklore, the throne is cursed and anyone who dares sit on it will die within seven years. Either the fairies, the woman's ghost, or her husband's ghost don't want people to sit there. Needless to say, local teenagers of course go to the Village to sit on the throne.

Other legends say that anyone who lingers too long in the Village will begin to hear the fairy

voices and go insane.

Historians say the Village was not built at the bidding of a fairy-maddened woman, but was instead simply part of a local amusement park that has long since gone out of business. Visitors would ride a miniature railroad through the village and admire the charming little fairy houses. It's interesting how something charming and twee can quickly become a source of horror.

I also think it's interesting how supernatural stories arise to explain things that seem anomalous or strange. For example, when I was teenager in Haverhill, Massachusetts one of the local cemeteries contained a headstone surrounded by an iron cage. My friends and I had been told the cage was there to keep the grave's undead resident in, but in reality the cage was to keep people away from the stone. The grave was for a countess who was the subject of one of John Greenleaf Whittier's poems, and in the 19th century fans of the poem would chip off pieces of the stone. The cage was built to keep souvenir seekers away, not to keep a vampiric spirit in.

That's a bit of a digression, but the same principal is at play with the Little People's Village. The origin of something becomes forgotten and legends arise to explain it. Certain patterns repeat in these legends. For example, the throne in Middlebury is not the only lethal site in Connecticut. People who visit Midnight Mary's grave in New Haven are also rumored to die after seven years. Further north in Montpelier, Vermont, anyone foolish enough to sit on the statue of Black Agnes will die in seven days.

A cursed site, death, and the number seven. You can see how the pattern repeats. I think people find great satisfaction in these stories, grim as they are. We all suspect there are secret powers at work in the world, even in our own hometowns. These stories are reflections of the secret order we hope and fear operates behind the mundane world.

Tony and I had hoped to visit the Little People's Village this spring but we didn't make it. If you go don't vandalize anything (many of the houses have been severely damaged) and watch out for ticks, which may be deadlier than evil fairies. If you can't go, you might want to watch this video of the village.

My sources for this post were Damned Connecticut, Roadtrippers.com, and this page about haunted sites in Connecticut. All excellent sources if you want more information.

One last thought: if you do visit, don't sit on the throne. You never know when a legend might be true.

/ Copyright 2014 Evernote Corporation. All rights reserved. */.en-markup-crop-options { top: 18px !important; left: 50% !important; margin-left: -100px !important; width: 200px !important; border: 2px rgba(255,255,255,.38) solid !important; border-radius: 4px !important; }.en-markup-crop-options div div:first-of-type { margin-left: 0px !important; }*

16

ALEXANDRA BARRATT

Continental women mystics and English readers

In 1406 Sir Henry (later Lord) Fitzhugh, trusted servant of King Henry IV, visited Vadstena, the Bridgettine monastery for men and women in Sweden. Vadstena was the mother-house of the Order of the Most Holy Saviour and had been founded by the controversial continental mystic St Bridget of Sweden, who had died in 1373 and had been canonized in 1391. Fitzhugh was so impressed by what he saw that he gave one of his manors near Cambridge as the future site for an English Bridgettine foundation. It was not until 1415 that Henry V, son of Henry IV, laid the foundation-stone of Syon Abbey at Twickenham in Middlesex and Fitzhugh's dream became a reality. But Fitzhugh's generous gesture is an indication of the degree of pious and aristocratic interest in the Swedish visionary and prophet in early fifteenth-century England.

Margery of Lynn; Julian of Norwich

Two years earlier, in 1413, Margery Kempe of Lynn in East Anglia had been granted an interview by Philip Repingdon, Bishop of Lincoln. His visitor intrigued him; he listened sympathetically to her account of her spiritual experiences and then made an unusual suggestion:

sche schewyd hym hyr meditacyons and hy [high] contemplacyons and other
secret thyngys bothe of qwyk [living] and ded as Owyr Lord schewyd [revealed]
to hire sowle. He was rygth glad to heryn hem [them] . . . cownselyng [advising]
hire sadly [seriously] that hire felyngys [thoughts] schuld be wretyn [written
(down)] . . .¹

To Margery the idea that she should have her spiritual experiences set down in writing had the shock of the new, and she refused, saying that this was not God's will. But to Repingdon Margery must have seemed a fascinating home-grown variety of a species with which he, as a late medieval Latinate

could also be used against the Wyclifites. Moreover, the Swedish saint had conveniently supported the English claim to the French throne that underlaid the Hundred Years' War: not surprisingly, the relevant revelations were harnessed to the nationalist cause.

Bridgettine material was also absorbed into original works of spiritual instruction. The anonymous but immensely popular *Contemplations of the Dread and Love of God*¹⁰ contains a great deal of material lifted from the revelations and was in its turn mined by the much-copied *Pore Caitiff* and by a version of the *De remediis contra temptationes* [Remedies against Temptations] by William Flete, spiritual adviser to Catherine of Siena. Similarly, a sermon on the Assumption of the Virgin in Cambridge University Library MS Hh. 1.11 (which, as we have seen, also contains the only Middle English manuscript version of Elizabeth of Hungary's revelations) draws on several Bridgettine texts. Bridget's vivid though somewhat old-fashioned visions of Christ's Passion frequently appear in compilations and were recycled in other works such as the Carthusian *Speculum devotorum* and *The Fruyte of Redempcyon*, printed by Wynkyn de Worde in 1514. Other extracts were arranged to constitute the Virgin Mary's autobiography as told to Bridget, found in Oxford Bodley MS Rawlinson C 41.¹¹

There is considerable evidence that Bridget's writings were widespread in later medieval England. The donation to the Cistercian nuns at Swine included a Latin text of Bridget's revelations; Durham University MS Cosin v.iii.16, already mentioned as containing Mechthild texts, contains Latin extracts; the Augustinian canons at Thurgarton owned a copy of the Latin revelations; the catalogue of the last prior of Monk Bretton, a Cluniac priory, listed a copy. Cambridge University Library MS 11.6.40, which belonged to Johanna Mouresleygh (fl. 1441, 1460), a Benedictine nun at Shaftesbury, contains a Bridget extract, in English.

Bridget texts are also mentioned in wills far more often than those of any other woman visionary. In 1415 Henry le Scrope, lord of Masham, bequeathed a copy to his brother Stephen, Archdeacon of Richmond. Around 1420 John Dygon, recluse of Sheen, and Johanna, recluse of St Botolph's, London, gave a copy of the revelations to Magdalen College, Oxford. (It is still there, as Oxford, Magdalen MS 77.) In 1432 Robert Semer bequeathed a 'Bridget book' to William Bramley; in 1468 Elizabeth Sewerby and in 1481 Margaret Purdaunce of Norwich left copies in their wills. In 1495 Cicely, Duchess of York, left her copy to her granddaughter Anne de la Pole, while Agnes Vavasour, a Cistercian nun at Swine, was bequeathed books by Bridget, perhaps by her aunt.

Other evidence of Bridget's popularity in England is a verse life, *Salutacio Sancte Birgitte*, written by the poet John Audelay around 1426,¹² in which

he praises Syon Abbey, the only English house of the Order of the Most Holy Saviour. There can be no doubt that the presence from 1415 onwards of an extremely pious, wealthy, and well-connected Bridgettine house near London was the primary factor in the circulation of Bridgettine texts and the growth of devotion to the saint. Syon was a focus for pilgrimage, where the famous 'Pardon', or indulgence, could be bought – Margery Kempe herself visited Syon, probably in 1433 (*BMK* p. 245/31–3) – and, given its strong links with Europe, a centre for the dissemination of devotion to St Bridget in particular and up-to-the minute continental cults in general.

Numerous manuscripts of Bridget's revelations and other associated texts directly connected with Syon Abbey are still extant today. Unfortunately, there is no surviving catalogue of the nuns' library (unlike that of the brethren) but much can be reconstructed.¹³ For instance, British Library MS Arundel 146 must have belonged to Syon as it contains the Additions to the Bridgettine rule.¹⁴ Cambridge University Library MS Ff.6.33 contains extracts from the revelations and may have belonged to the Syon sisters. Syon owned British Library MS Harley 612, an important Latin manuscript that contains a corpus of Bridgettine writings, including the *Defensorium Sanctae Birgittae* by the Benedictine Adam Easton (d. 1397).

The many early sixteenth-century printed editions of the revelations were aimed at a reading public interested in vernacular devotional literature, in the continental mystics, and in the religious life. This interest extended to the highest in the land: in 1491, Lady Margaret Beaufort, mother of Henry VII, together with his wife, Queen Elizabeth, commissioned William Caxton to print an edition of a spurious but extremely popular text attributed to St Bridget, the *Fifteen Oes* (STC 20195). Renowned for her piety and learning as well as for her single-minded dedication to the political interests of her son, Lady Margaret had close contacts with Syon. She herself translated two contemporary European devotional works familiar to the Bridgettines: part of Thomas à Kempis's *Imitation of Christ*, and a penitential text by a Flemish Carthusian monk, *The Mirror of Gold to the Sinful Soul*.¹⁵ These were not however written by women, and are devotional rather than mystical.

Among their many idiosyncrasies, the Bridgettine nuns had a distinctive Latin liturgy that Christ himself had dictated to their foundress.¹⁶ This was translated into English some time after 1435 and was presumably used by the nuns in multiple manuscript copies. In 1530 it was printed as *The Myrroure of Oure Ladye*, perhaps with the aim of allowing every Syon nun to have her own copy – in blissful ignorance that only nine years later they would be turned out of their monastery by Henry VIII and would go into exile in Flanders.

Catherine of Siena

Bridget may have been the best known of the continental women visionaries, but the closest in time to Margery Kempe and Bishop Repington was the Italian Catherine of Siena (canonized in 1461). In fact, her dates (1347–80) make her a near contemporary of Julian of Norwich. Although of humbler, bourgeois origins – her father was a wool-dyer – Catherine showed a number of similarities to Bridget. (Significantly, visual representations of the two saints in English early printed books are virtually indistinguishable.) She was an ascetic and visionary, but not an enclosed nun. Rather, she continued to live at home, vowed to virginity as Dominican tertiary (tertiaries were in many ways like beguines) in the midst of her extensive family. She had many followers, both men and women, some of whom acted as her secretaries; she was active in politics, both in urban affairs and in international ecclesiastical diplomacy, demanding (like St Bridget a generation earlier) the return of the papacy to Rome.

Catherine even had a tenuous connection with England, for an English Augustinian friar, William Flete, was her spiritual adviser from 1362 to 1374. (He was succeeded by the better-known Raymund of Capua, a Dominican friar, who wrote the earliest biography of the saint.) This constitutes the only known personal link between the fourteenth-century English and Italian mystics, though there is in fact no evidence that William Flete maintained his links with England or helped circulate Catherine's writings there. But there is evidence for her cult in Britain in the late Middle Ages, including a convent of the Second Order of Dominican nuns, founded in Edinburgh in 1517, and dedicated to her. An early sixteenth-century copy of their constitutions and of the gospels to be read at Mass throughout the liturgical year survives as Edinburgh University Library MS 150.¹⁷

Catherine's principal mystical work, dictated in Italian in 1378, was known as the *Dialogo*. As the title suggests, it consists of a series of dialogues, between the soul of the mystic and God the Father. Raymund of Capua translated it into Latin and there is extant an English (or Scottish) manuscript of this version, now Edinburgh University Library MS 87, which was perhaps connected with the Edinburgh Dominican convent. In the early fifteenth century the Latin version was translated into Middle English for the benefit of the Syon nuns, as *The Orchard of Syon*:¹⁸ three manuscripts survive. Wynkyn de Worde eventually printed it for a wider audience in 1519.¹⁹ Syon's spiritual style was very different from the Italian saint's: notably, it lacked the dimension of social activism that made Catherine of Siena a role-model for the nineteenth-century English reformer Josephine Butler. Nonetheless the Bridgettine monastery was closely involved in the dissemination of devotion

to Catherine, and of knowledge of her life and writings, and the Bridgettine brothers for their part owned a copy of Catherine's *vita* and two of the *Dialogo*.

Lives of Catherine, such as that owned by the Syon brethren, were also widely disseminated, and because they were relatively accessible may have been more influential than her somewhat demanding visionary writings. The Cistercian nunnery at Swine in Yorkshire owned at one time what is now British Library MS Harley 2409: this includes a life of Catherine and also one of William Flete's texts. The Prioress of Swine, Matilda Wade (fl. 1482), gave this book to a nun at Nuneaton, a house of the order of Fontevrault, another double order of monks and nuns, founded in the twelfth century by Robert of Arbrissel. In 1485–6 another nun at Swine was bequeathed an English life of the saint by her aunt. And the late fifteenth-century book-list of the Augustinian Thurgarton Priory includes Latin texts of the *Dialogo* and of the saint's life.

English women and continental Europe

Such, then, are the women mystics and visionaries of whom Bishop Repington might have known. Some at least became known to Margery Kempe herself in due course. This was inevitable: Margery came from Lynn on the Norfolk coast, which in the Middle Ages was an important port with close ties to the Baltic, Scandinavia, and Flanders. She herself travelled extensively in Europe, on pilgrimages to the Holy Land via Rome and to Santiago da Compostela in Galicia, Spain; she also went to northern Germany, possibly via Sweden. She quite blatantly adopted Bridget of Sweden as a role-model – and occasional rival: once when Margery witnessed at Mass the consecrated host flickering in the priest's hands, Our Lord assured her, 'My dowtyr, Bryde, say [saw] me neuyr in his wyse' (BMK, p. 47/26–7). Hope Emily Allen, who rediscovered the unique manuscript of *The Book of Margery Kempe* in the 1930s, was the first to suspect that the continental women visionaries exercised a strong influence on Margery's spirituality. The detailed work of more recent scholars has amply vindicated her hunch. Margery mentions Bridget's revelations ('Bride's book') in the same breath as Walter Hilton's writings, as the *Stimulus amoris* of James of Milan, and as Richard Rolle's *Incendium amoris* (BMK, p. 39/23–5): these were all texts read her by her confessor (BMK, p. 143/27). Indeed on one occasion God himself vouched for their authenticity – 'it is trewe euery word þat is wretyn in Brides boke' (BMK, p. 47/33–4). As a pilgrim in Rome, Margery visited places that Bridget had visited (BMK, p. 95/25–9) and interviewed people who had known her (BMK, p. 95/10–22). Margery and her confessor also knew the revelations of

St Elizabeth of Hungary (BMK, p. 153/13–14), and the latter, at least, had read Jacques de Vitry's life of the Flemish beguine Mary of Oignies, as we have already seen.

More problematic, and perhaps more interesting, is whether Julian of Norwich knew anything of these continental women mystics. Julian was clearly trained, in the English tradition, to eschew visionary experience. She explains that, although her desire for 'mende of [Christ's] Passion' led her to request 'a bodily sight [vision] wherein I might have more knowledge of the bodily peynes [physical sufferings] of our saviour' (that is, perhaps, the kind of detailed vision of the Crucifixion experienced by Bridget), this was the extent of her mystical ambitions: 'Other sight ner sheweing [revelation] of God desired I never none till the soule was departid [separated] fro the body.'²⁰ Later, when apparently dying, she remembers this desire and again stresses, 'But in this I desired never bodily sight nor sheweing of God.'²¹ She never refers to any visionaries by name but the desire she mentions in the course of her revelations for 'ful syte [comprehensive vision] of helle and purgatory' is intriguing. Many such revelations were granted to Bridget of Sweden, though it must be added that accounts of such Otherworld visions and voyages are common in the Middle Ages, such as the fifteenth-century revelation of Purgatory 'showed to a holy woman',²² (not to mention Dante's *Divine Comedy*). Julian is careful, however, to protest that she did not want any special insight – 'But it was not my mening to maken prive [be confidentially informed] of anything that longyth [appertains] to the feith'²³ – nor was she prompted by lack of faith. When she goes further and wants information about the destiny of a particular person – whether 'a certeyn creature that I lovid' would persevere in virtuous living – she is refused an answer.²⁴ This kind of curiosity about the fate of individual souls (Julian calls it 'syngular [specific] desire') is characteristic of Bridget and Mechthild, both of whom often sought, and were granted, such privileged information.²⁵ Julian, in contrast, learns that 'it is mor worship [honour] to God to knowen al things in general than to lyken in onythyng in special'.

Julian, of course, is writing relatively early, in the last quarter of the fourteenth century. Clearly it was from the first quarter of the fifteenth century, particularly after the establishment of Syon Abbey, that continental women visionaries achieved such prominence as they would ever enjoy in England. It is equally clear that without the promotional activities of the Carthusians, as well as of the Bridgettine brethren, they would have made little if any impact on those people, whether lay men and women or female religious, who did not read Latin. As it is, their influence on the latter years of the Middle Ages in England must have been considerable if occasionally deplorable, as in the sad case of Elizabeth Barton, the Holy Maid of Kent.

It is perhaps a measure of Britain's post-medieval insularity (encapsulated in the notorious but possibly apocryphal newspaper headline 'Fog in Channel – Continent Isolated') that we should find it slightly surprising, or intriguing, that writings of continental women mystics circulated in England. In the medieval mind England was, literally, marginalized. The thirteenth-century *Mappa Mundi* preserved at Hereford Cathedral graphically represents the British Isles as two islands squeezed uncomfortably into the outer circumference of the known world. England was culturally subservient to France, from which it drew its dominant literary and artistic models, and spiritually dependent on Rome. Its rulers harboured extensive political and military ambitions towards France while they cultivated dynastic ties with ruling families all over Europe; its merchant classes were heavily reliant on trade with the greater European market.

But the trade in mystical texts was not all one-way. The Bridgettine mother-house at Vadstena owned a manuscript containing two Latin texts by the mid-fourteenth-century Yorkshire mystic Richard Rolle (now Uppsala MS University C. 1), while the Charterhouse at Enghien in Flanders also owned two Rolle manuscripts, now Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale MSS 1485 and 2103. The existence of Latin translations of the Middle English *Mirror of Simple Souls*, as of *The Cloud of Unknowing*, *The Scale of Perfection*, and the early thirteenth-century guide for anchoresses *Ancrene Wisse*, suggests that some clerics saw great possibilities for English mystical writings, if only they could be disentangled from the obscure and barbarous language in which they usually circulated!

But in the final analysis the continental women visionaries not only offered spiritual guidance: their very existence surely nourished extraordinary and, until then, unthinkable ambitions in their readers. One is tempted to say that these women must have been revelations in their own right. The very existence of the works of continental women visionaries in English translation must have served as a constant reminder that such women, who were not only mystics but also writers, did indeed exist – an existence otherwise only too easily forgotten.

NOTES

1. *The Book of Margery Kempe*, ed. Sanford Brown Meech and Hope Emily Allen, EETS OS 212 (London: Oxford University Press, 1940), pp. 42/7–43/20. All subsequent references by page and line number are to this edition, cited as *BMK*.
2. *Book for a Simple and Devout Woman*, ed. F. N. M. Dickstra (Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 1998), lines 7620–5.
3. *Ibid.*, lines 7633–8.

4. Edited by C. Horstmann, 'Prosalegenden: Die Legenden des Ms. Douce 114', *Anglia* 8 (1885): 134-84.
5. *The Book of Ghostly Grace*, ed. Teresa Halligan (Toronto: Pontifical Institute for Mediaeval Studies, 1979). See also *Women's Writing in Middle English*, ed. Alexandra Barratt, Longman Annotated Texts (London: Longman, 1992), pp. 49-60.
6. M. Doiron, 'The mirroure of simple souls: A Middle English translation', *Archivio Italiano per la Storia della Pietà* 5 (1968), 247-355. See also *Women's Writing in Middle English*, ed. Barratt, pp. 61-70.
7. Both versions have now been edited by Sarah McNamer, *The Two Middle English Translations of the Revelations of St Elizabeth of Hungary*, Middle English Texts 28 (Heidelberg: C. Winter, 1996).
8. For a brief introduction and for edited extracts from some of the Middle English versions, see *Women's Writing in Middle English*, ed. Barratt, pp. 84-94.
9. One (that found in BL MS Claudius B 1) has been edited: see *The Liber Coelestis of St Bridget of Sweden*, vol. 1: text, ed. by Roger Ellis, EETS OS 291 (Oxford University Press, 1987).
10. *Contemplations of the Dread and Love of God*, ed. Margaret Connolly, EETS OS 303 (Oxford University Press, 1993).
11. See *Women's Writing in Middle English*, ed. Barratt, p. 85.
12. See *The Revelations of Saint Birgitta*, ed. W. P. Cumming, EETS OS 178 (Oxford University Press, 1929), pp. xxxi-xxxvii.
13. See Christopher de Hamel, *Syon Abbey: The Library of the Bridgettine Nuns and their Peregrinations after the Reformation* (London: Roxburghe Club, 1991), for a magisterial account of the surviving information.
14. 'The Rewyll of Seynt Sauoure' and Other Middle English Brigittine Legislative Texts, Vol. 2, ed. James Hogg, Salzburger Studien zur Anglistik und Amerikanistik 6 (Salzburg: Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik, 1978).
15. See *Women's Writing in Middle English*, ed. Barratt, pp. 301-10.
16. See *The Bridgettine Breviary of Syon Abbey*, ed. A. J. Collins, Henry Bradshaw Society 96 (Worcester: Stanbrook Abbey Press, 1969).
17. Published as *Liber Conventus S. Katherine Senensis prope Edinburgum*, ed. J. Maidment (Edinburgh: Abbotsford Club, 1841).
18. *The Orchard of Syon*, ed. Phyllis Hodgson and Gabriel M. Liegey, EETS OS 258 (Oxford University Press, 1966).
19. See *Women's Writing in Middle English*, ed. Barratt, pp. 95-107, for a brief note on Catherine and some extracts from the Middle English translation.
20. *Julian of Norwich: A Revelation of Love*, ed. Marion Glasscoe (Exeter University Press, 1986, repr. 1989), p. 2. Cf. *Julian of Norwich's Revelations of Divine Love: The Shorter Version*, ed. Frances Beer, Middle English Texts 8 (Heidelberg: C. Winter, 1978), p. 39/7, 21-3 and pp. 39/26-40/1.
21. Ibid., p. 4. Cf. *Julian of Norwich's Revelations*, ed. Beer, p. 43/1-2.
22. In *Women's Writing in Middle English*, ed. Barratt, pp. 163-76.
23. Ibid., p. 34. There is no parallel in the Shorter Version.
24. Ibid., p. 36. Cf. *Julian of Norwich's Revelations*, p. 64/16-17.
25. See, for instance, the extract from Mechthild in *Women's Writing in Middle English*, ed. Barratt, pp. 58-60.

and cosmopolitan cleric, would have been familiar: the European woman mystic.

At the time Repingdon made his unsettling suggestion, there were no indigenous, vernacular texts by women mystics in circulation in England. Indeed, it has been convincingly argued that English religious women were actively discouraged from pursuing this type of spirituality, let alone recording the results in writing. The fifteenth-century *Book for a Simple and Devout Woman* cautions against cultivating visions and other paranormal religious experiences, for these open the door to vanity and pride:

My dere suster, my consaile is þat þu f3zte a3eyn [fight against] vayneglorie [vanity], for þerof þu art moste fondud [tempted]. Dremes and siztes [visions] þat þu seest in þi slepe, zeue to hem no feiþe [credence]. Lyft þyn herte holiche from hem and haue hem alle suspecte, ne tel no worde bi [about] hem to non to wite what þey wolde mene. Sopfaste sizte [true vision] is, and of parfite mede [(deserving) perfect reward], knowynge of þyself, þorw þe whiche quyknep [comes to life] knowyng of God and vnyte wiþ hym.²

The pursuit of self-knowledge is preferable, and the clerical author urges his charge, rather than trying to scale the dangerous heights of contemplation, to stick to the ascetic, purgative way:

Of penaunce and of hardschip [austerity] siker buþ [sure are] þe weyes [ways], and of contemplacion vnstabele [uncertain] and somdel to drede [somewhat to be feared]. So perlus hit is on hy3 [high] to clymbe, and siker wei [sure way] to God hit is þat mon holde hym lowe [one should consider oneself as humble]. Aungeles office [function] hit is heuenliche þyngus [things] to knowe and to wite [know] þe pryuytes [secrets] þat mow not be departed [shared]. Hit is inow [enough] to mon to se his owne lodliche [ugly] synnes.³

But such advice was not universally followed. Forty years before Margery's visit, in May 1373, a young woman on the point of death had experienced sixteen visions of the crucified Christ. At the time she was 'thirty and one half years old', and was later to become an anchoress in Repingdon's own diocese, attached to a church just a short walk from his cathedral. Not long after her miraculous recovery, Julian of Norwich described her experiences in the Short Version of *A Revelation of Love*. But there is no evidence that her text, so intensively studied today, circulated widely, if at all, in the Middle Ages. It survives in just one fifteenth-century manuscript, which belonged to a Carthusian monastery, BL MS Additional 37790 (the Amherst Manuscript). Fifteen or twenty years later Julian recast this as the Long

Version, the earliest surviving complete manuscripts of which are as late as the seventeenth century.

Julian is frequently mentioned in Norwich wills: people left her money, but there is not a single piece of evidence that they knew of her writings or her revelations. Margery Kempe consulted her because she enjoyed a reputation as a spiritual adviser: 'the ankres was expert in swech thyngys and good counsel coud yevyn' (*BMK*, pp. 42/7–43/20). But in the detailed, and very convincing, account that she gives of their conversations, neither woman refers to Julian's visions, though the irrepressible Margery cannot resist mentioning her own 'many wondirful reuelacyons' (*BMK*, p. 42/14).

Nonetheless, in continental Europe there was a long tradition (or rather several traditions) of women visionaries, quantitatively far more important than the native English strain. Repingdon must have been familiar with some of them, at least, as their texts circulated in both Latin and vernacular versions. They were read and owned by devout lay men and women of the aristocracy, the gentry, and the urban middle class, as well as by monks, nuns, and other religious, as we shall see.

Hildegard of Bingen

The great twelfth-century Benedictine saint and abbess, Hildegard of Bingen (1098–1179), visionary, poet, musician, scientific and medical writer, wrote prolifically if eccentrically in Latin. But she was known in medieval England in her less familiar role as an apocalyptic prophetess (hence her epithet 'the Sibyl of the Rhine'), rather than as a mystic. Possibly Repingdon saw Margery Kempe as a potential 'Sibyl of the Ouse': as a former supporter of the theologian and heretic John Wyclif (though under pressure he had recanted those radical views and had gone on to become a bishop) he would certainly have known of Hildegard and her writings. For she had, particularly in her 'Cologne letter' of c. 1162, apparently prophesied the demands that Wyclif was to make in the late fourteenth century for the disendowment of the Church (that is, that it should be deprived of its extensive lands and temporal possessions). Some of Hildegard's writings were also seen as predicting the rise of the mendicants (principally the Franciscan and the Dominican orders) who owned no property, either individually or collectively, and lived (at least in theory) by begging. Those who disapproved of the new movement were happy to appropriate – even on occasion to forge – her writings.

Consequently, Hildegard probably enjoyed greater fame among the learned than she would have commanded simply as a woman visionary. According to their library catalogue, the brothers of the Bridgettine abbey

of Syon had once owned (but had lost) a copy of a prophecy about the mendicants. They still possessed at the time of the dissolution of the monasteries a book containing her *Scivias*, while the Benedictine abbeys of Battle and Glastonbury both owned copies of her complete prophecies. But none of Hildegard's writings were translated into English in the Middle Ages, although in the sixteenth century her Latin texts were printed. So in spite of the renown she has won in the last twenty or thirty years, Julian of Norwich and Margery Kempe very likely knew nothing about her.

Whom else might Repingdon have known? Elizabeth of Schönau (1126–64) was, like Hildegard, a Benedictine nun and abbess. She experienced visions and other supernatural manifestations but did not write them down herself. Egbert, her brother, however, composed a life of his sister which recorded her revelations. A mid-thirteenth-century catalogue of the books belonging to the Benedictine Glastonbury Abbey lists a copy, while the late fourteenth-century catalogue of Dover Priory (also a Benedictine house) lists her vision concerning the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. But, as with Hildegard, though there is some evidence that her Latin life circulated in England, it was never translated into Middle English.

Beguines

Lives of women visionaries could be important conduits of influence. In the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries the area around Liège in the north of France and what is now Belgium produced a remarkable flowering of 'holy women'. Many were beguines, that is, women leading a religious life in self-supporting and self-governing communities or sometimes in their own homes, rather than enclosed as contemplative nuns in convents. They were mainly illiterate in Latin, and sometimes even in their vernaculars (principally French and Flemish), but we know of their experiences from their Latin lives or *vitae*, written by their male confessors or disciples. The Dominican friar, Thomas of Cantimpré, and the cardinal/bishop, Jacques de Vitry, wrote a number of these. De Vitry in particular was a prominent apologist for beguine life and for their spirituality, which foregrounded visionary experiences combined with paranormal phenomena and ferocious asceticism.

There is no evidence that the beguine saints were known in England until the end of the Middle Ages. In the fifteenth century the Augustinian canons of Thurgarton in Yorkshire (where Walter Hilton, the fourteenth-century mystic and author of *The Scale of Perfection*, retired) owned a life 'of the three virgins Elizabeth, Christina and Marie'. This could well be identical with Oxford Bodley MS Douce 114, a manuscript connected with the Carthusian order, that contains the only surviving copy of the lives of the beguines

Elisabeth of Spalbek, Christina the Marvellous (she certainly lived up to her name), and Mary of Oignies, all translated from the Latin into Middle English.⁴ Around the same time, Margery Kempe's confessor was reading Jacques de Vitry's life of Mary of Oignies (either in Latin or English), and it profoundly altered his negative attitude towards Margery's weeping.

Further evidence of beguine influence (apart from that of the treatise by Marguerite Porete, who will be discussed below) occurs right at the end of our period. Marie of Oisterwijk, a Flemish beguine who died as late as 1547, lived as a recluse under the protection of the Cologne Charterhouse. (Carthusian monks, both on the continent and in England, played a vital role in encouraging women visionaries and in preserving and circulating their writings.) British Library MS Harley 494 contains an English translation of a devotional exercise addressed to the Five Wounds of Jesus, introduced as 'certain prayers showed unto a devout person called Mary Ostrewyk'. Significantly, perhaps, it is found immediately after an extract from another continental mystical text, Mechthild of Helfta's revelations.

This is a rare example of beguine infiltration into England (where, surprisingly, the movement never took root) but it is not unique. In 1533, only months before the execution of the Benedictine nun Elizabeth Barton, the Holy Maid of Kent, *The Mirror or Glass of Christ's Passion*, by the Bridgettine monk John Fewterer, was printed. This vast and scholarly book is largely concerned with identification with Christ through meditation on his Passion, his sufferings on the cross. The author chooses to present Mary of Oignies, whose life he knew through the *Speculum Historiale* of the thirteenth-century Dominican friar Vincent of Beauvais, as a model of the benefits such meditation can provide.

Women of Helfta

In the second half of the thirteenth century a group of women mystics had emerged at the Benedictine monastery of Helfta in Saxony, then under the leadership of its abbess Gertrud of Hackeborn. Her younger sister Mechthild (c. 1240–98), novice mistress and chantress at Helfta, was a visionary but did not herself write down her experiences. This was done in Latin sometime after 1290 by Gertrud of Helfta (1256–1301), a younger contemporary to whom she had acted as novice mistress, and by another (anonymous) nun. Mechthild's collected visions constituted the *Liber spiritualis* (sometimes *specialis gratiae* [Book of Spiritual (or Special) Grace]). Gertrud too was an influential visionary and her experiences are recorded in Latin in the *Legatus divinae pietatis* [The Herald of God's Loving-Kindness]. She wrote Book 2 herself, while others compiled the biography that makes up

Book 1 and the collection of visions in Books 3, 4, and 5. This work was not translated into English in the Middle Ages and was probably not known in England in Latin either.

In contrast, the *Liber spiritualis gratiae* was well known in England and, although Mechthild is not widely read today, her visions had an extensive and understandable appeal. They are vividly visual, very beautiful, and not obviously unorthodox or alarmingly innovative in their theology. Like those of Gertrud, they particularly encourage devotion to the Heart of Jesus as the quintessence of his human nature, within the context of the sacrament of the Mass and the liturgical year. The *Liber* was translated into Middle English, although in an abbreviated form. Two manuscripts of this translation, *The Book of Ghostly Grace*, survive: British Library MS Egerton 2006, which once belonged to Richard III and his wife, Anne of Warwick; and Oxford MS Bodley 220, written by a certain John Wells, who may have been a Carthusian monk.⁵ Both belong to the fifteenth century.

Possibly a Carthusian monk translated Mechthild's *Liber* for the Bridgettine nuns of Syon. As we have already mentioned, the Carthusians rather specialized in collecting, studying, and copying the writings of orthodox women mystics. The important Charterhouse (Carthusian monastery) of Sheen was directly opposite Syon on the other side of the River Thames, and relations between the two religious houses were close (though too close for comfort on occasions). Surprisingly, it was the Carthusians, rather than the Bridgettine monks, who seem to have taken the initiative in the spiritual direction of the nuns. Bridgettine nuns, who were highly regarded in fifteenth-century England, took their vocation and the development of their spiritual lives extremely seriously and they needed suitable reading matter in English.

References to Mechthild, known as 'Matilda' or 'Maud' to English readers, and extracts both in English and Latin from her revelations have been identified in a total of nine medieval devotional works and spiritual compilations. These include two in the Bridgettine *Myroure of Oure Ladye* (see further below); another in the *Speculum devotorum*, compiled for a nun by a Carthusian; and extracts and passages attributed to Mechthild in several other manuscripts. Many of these have Bridgettine or Carthusian connections and contain texts by other women visionaries popular at Syon, notably Bridget of Sweden and Catherine of Siena.

Copies of both the Latin original and the Middle English translation of Mechthild seem to have been surprisingly common. In the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century, the local vicar donated a collection of books to Swine Priory in Yorkshire, a house of Cistercian nuns. It included a copy of the *Liber*, probably of the Latin text, even though the gift was made to a house of religious women, who normally could not read Latin. A late

fifteenth-century book-list shows that the Augustinian canons of Thurgarton owned a copy of Mechthild's revelations, while Syon Abbey owned four complete copies, one in English, and a text printed in 1513. A manuscript now in Durham University Library (MS Cosin v.iii.16), which belonged to Syon Abbey, contains Latin extracts from the *Liber* together with a letter in English to the sisters, urging them to read the accompanying texts. And as late as the Elizabethan age, Robert Barker, vicar of Drifffield, who died in 1581, owned a *Liber S. Matildis*, which had probably come from Byland Abbey in Yorkshire.

Devout lay people also owned Mechthild's revelations. Cicely, Duchess of York, mother of Richard III, who was noted for her piety, is said to have had the book read aloud to her during mealtimes; she bequeathed her copy to her granddaughter Brigitte, a Dominican nun. Alienora (or Eleanor) Roos of York, who died in 1438, owned a text described as 'maulde buke', probably a Middle English version of Mechthild who as we have mentioned was known as Maud in English. This she bequeathed in her will to Dame Joan Courtenay, who was probably a nun.

Marguerite Porete

Marguerite Porete was a contemporary of Gertrud of Helfta. A beguine from Hainault in Flanders, in 1310 she was burned at the stake in Paris for heresy. The treatise that caused her undoing, *Le Mirrouer des simples ames* [The Mirror of Simple Souls], was originally written in French. The Inquisition condemned it as heretical on a number of grounds, notably that Marguerite taught that certain favoured souls no longer needed the Church and its sacraments, nor were they obliged to observe the rules of Christian morality. As part of their investigations, the Inquisition had her book translated into Latin, the better to scrutinize and condemn it. Ironically, four of these Latin manuscripts survive while only one, late and corrupt, copy of the French original has come down to us. Marguerite's book was also translated into Italian and into English.⁶

Like Hildegard, Marguerite fascinates modern readers but was little known in England in the Middle Ages. In contrast to the work of many other continental women visionaries, there is no evidence that her text circulated among women readers, possibly because people quickly forgot that a woman had written it. Indeed, *The Mirror* clearly had a very restricted circulation in England: no wills, catalogues, inventories, or library lists have so far come to light that make any mention of her text. It is true that three manuscripts of the Middle English translation survive, a creditable total for a medieval text. But all three belonged to individual Carthusian monks or to

Carthusian monasteries, a rarefied and exclusive spiritual milieu. (One copy is found in the same manuscript, BL Add. 37790, that contains the only copy of the Short Text of Julian's *A Revelation of Love*.)

Further evidence of Carthusian interest, even sponsorship, of *The Mirror* is the translation into Latin made by Richard Methley who was a monk at Mount Grace Charterhouse in Yorkshire (the house where the only copy of *The Book of Margery Kempe* was held). Presumably he knew nothing of the earlier Latin translation made by the Inquisition. Perhaps he made his own translation so that the text, which he must have admired and valued, could be examined with greater theological subtlety. It would also reach a wider clerical audience throughout Europe, as Latin was the international language of the Church.

The three Middle English copies are remarkably similar, even to the extent of conscientiously transmitting obvious gibberish, for the translation is extremely literal. This suggests that the copies must have been produced under tight editorial control, with strict instructions to the scribes to change nothing. The translator, probably a Carthusian, clearly had no idea that the text was heretical, let alone that a woman had written it. But he did betray some unease with the content and from time to time adds defensive explanatory notes marked with his initials, 'M.N.'

Elizabeth of Hungary

'Elizabeth of Hungary' is a familiar name and a popular saint. She was born in 1207, the daughter of the Hungarian king, and was briefly but happily married to the Count of Thuringia, to whom she bore several children before he departed and died on Crusade. She then became a model of Franciscan piety and poverty, dying exhausted by her austerities before she was twenty-four in 1231. But it is arguable that the Elizabeth of Hungary whose 'treatise' Margery Kempe cites as providing a precedent for her own weeping (BMK, p. 154/13-14) was a different person altogether. This other Elizabeth, born nearly a hundred years later in 1294, daughter of another king of Hungary, was a Dominican nun in the Swiss convent of Töss who died in 1336. Margery (or her confessor) probably had in mind, and was familiar with, the so-called *Revelations of St Elizabeth*, of which two Middle English versions survive.⁷ This is a brief Latin text that largely consists of highly imaginative dialogues between Elizabeth and the Virgin Mary, and later Christ himself. It seems to have appealed to the medieval mind, for it was translated into numerous European languages.

The first Middle English translation survives in a single early fifteenth-century manuscript, Cambridge University Library MS Hh.1.11. This

probably belonged to a community of East Anglian nuns, possibly to the Franciscans of Bruisyard, Suffolk. The other version does not survive in manuscript at all but was printed by Wynkyn de Worde, in or around 1492, and then reprinted c. 1500. It follows a translation of the much longer *Life* of St Catherine of Siena by her confessor Raymund of Capua. Catherine and her writings, as we shall see, were promoted in England by the Bridgettines of Syon Abbey, who may also have suggested the Elizabeth text to de Worde. It is perhaps significant that the brothers of Syon at one time owned a copy of the revelations in English, which was lost or removed. Perhaps they had lent it to de Worde: early printers often destroyed their copy-text after it had been typeset.

Bridget of Sweden

All the visionaries mentioned so far have occupied, as it were, niche positions. By far the best known of the continental women mystics, the only one who was in any way a household name and whose followers could count on widespread brand-recognition, was Bridget of Sweden (1302 or 1303–73).⁸ Bridget (or Birgit, or Birgitta) was a very modern saint. Aristocratic; married; a mother (of eight, no less); critic and adviser of popes and kings; foundress of a revolutionary religious order for men and women but never a nun herself; visionary and mystic: she exemplified the 'mixed life' that combined the pursuit of contemplation with active virtue and political involvement, even though the nuns of her own religious order were strictly enclosed. In particular she insistently lobbied for the return of the papacy from Avignon to Rome.

Bridget's writings became increasingly widely read during the fifteenth century, by both lay and religious. The Spanish bishop, Alphonse de Pecha, had definitively fixed the vast Latin text of her revelations, consisting of eight books, some time before 1377. A distinctive and identifiable textual tradition of the Latin prevailed in England, reflected by the two, independent, Middle English translations of the whole text.⁹ There were also separate selections of compilations in Latin, and at least seven survive in Middle English. These tended to draw on those revelations with elements of prophecy, or details about the lives of Christ and the Virgin, or instructions about the spiritual life. In addition, short passages from Bridget's revelations were often copied, and recopied, to fill the odd page or half-page in individual manuscripts.

Many of the prophetic revelations criticized the clergy, and are analogous to the Hildegard material that circulated in England. But Bridget's emphasis on the validity of the priestly office, however immoral the individual priest,

Cop Admits To Posing as Woman To Give 60 Men Oral Sex Through A Hole... But There's More - Counter Current News

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Cop Admits To Posing as Woman To Give 60 Men Oral Sex Through A Hole... But There's More



cop-posed-oral

Chesterfield, MO – A Missouri police officer has recently been exposed as a sexual predator who terrorized his community, and this week he has pleaded guilty to the first of the charges against him. Although a recent investigation has revealed that former Chesterfield police officer David E. Cerna is

connected with a number of different sex crimes, the first charges against him stem from a scam that he ran on craigslist where he pretended to be a woman and lured straight men to his home for anonymous oral sex.

On the website, the 34-year-old police officer would offer free oral sex and send them a picture of a woman that he claimed to be, but when the men arrived at his home, he said he would only perform the act anonymously, through a hole in the door. At least 60 straight men were coaxed into this situation and were recorded by Cerna, who later posted the videos on pornography websites. He was later charged with invasion of privacy for recording and publishing the sex acts and plead guilty this week.

However, the resulting investigation uncovered even more evidence of wrongdoing on the part of officer Cerna, including at least one circumstance where an underage boy was arrested and sexually assaulted on camera. The investigation also showed that Cerna had placed a spy camera in the bathroom of a local convenience store and posted those

recordings on porn sites as well. It was suggested in some reports that the sites were actually owned by Cerna, meaning that he was profiting from them as well.

After the investigation was made public, Attorney Gonzalo Fernandez pointed out that there were likely many underage victims that were directly assaulted by Cerna while he was on active duty.

"In fact the contact would often be initiated by him performing some sort of traffic stop. Some of these people are minors... I know one of them was as young as 16," Fernandez said.

"David Cerna kind of took it upon himself to walk through various bedrooms of the house by himself, which at the time seemed strange to the family and now knowing what they do about his propensity for clandestine filming, you wonder," he added.

The mother of the victims reportedly said, *'It's messed my son up horribly. He is paranoid all the time, thinking that someone is watching him, all the time. He won't sleep alone. He thinks people are after him all the time.'*

The investigation into the full extent of Cerna's crimes is still ongoing, and it is unclear exactly how much time he will be facing.

Article by John Vibes from The Free Thought Project. John Vibes is an author, researcher and investigative journalist who takes a special interest in the counter-culture and the drug war. In addition to his writing and activist work, he organizes a number of large events including the Free Your Mind Conference, which features top caliber speakers and whistle-blowers from all over the world. You can contact him and stay connected to his work at his Facebook page. You can find his 65 chapter Book entitled "Alchemy of the Timeless Renaissance" at bookpatch.com.

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APD re-keys entire fleet of cop cars after break-in highlights security issue

adn.com

Alaska Dispatch News

- Author: Devin Kelly
- Updated: 11 hours ago
- Published 1 day ago

The Anchorage Police Department is paying nearly \$140,000 to change the locks on its entire fleet of patrol cars after someone broke into a city tire shop in early April and exposed a security weakness — some cop cars have the same keys.

Early in the morning on April 7, a burglar forced open the door to the tire shop on Fairbanks Street. When police officers responded to a report of the break-in at 2:51 a.m., there was stuff scattered everywhere, said Anchorage police spokesperson Jennifer Castro. Shelves, cabinets and drawers had been rummaged through.

About four cop cars were also in the shop, dropped off by officers with late shifts for a tire changeover, Castro said.

None of the keys to the patrol cars were ultimately stolen, Castro said. But in the initial shuffle, only one key was accounted for, she said. While city staff were putting the shop back together and running an inventory of the equipment, Castro said, police officials feared someone had gotten the keys.

That triggered a much bigger security problem: Different makes and models of APD cars share the same key.

For example, if someone stole a key to a 2005 Impala, that person could have access to all the 2005 Impalas in the fleet, Castro said. She said no one key fits all the patrol cars, but she said one key might fit as many as a dozen vehicles.

Castro said it took about two weeks to get "absolute confirmation" from the tire shop that none of the police vehicle keys had been stolen. But she said the decision to rekey the patrol cars made sense either way.

"Even if the keys are being found, we still have this vulnerability," Castro said. "That there's people out there where stealing one key could have access to multiple vehicles," including police radio equipment, computers and rifles.

News of the break-in and of the patrol car rekeying was first reported by KTUU Channel 2.

Castro said the burglar did take two sets of keys to city Parks and Recreation department vehicles. She said those keys have since been recovered, and the vehicles rekeyed.

On April 21, about two weeks after the break-in, Anchorage Mayor Ethan Berkowitz signed a waiver to the normal bid process that expedited the selection of a locksmith, according to documents submitted to the Anchorage Assembly this week.

"Delay could result in severe safety issues to both APD personnel and the public," city officials wrote in the memo to Berkowitz.

The contract, for \$139,756, went to Able Locksmiths.

The 400 patrol cars that share common keys will now have unique keys, for both doors, ignition and trunk, Castro said.

Castro said police are still investigating the burglary and no one has been charged. She said police responded to nine other burglaries in Anchorage that same day, noting the city has generally seen a spree of property-related crimes in recent months.

City spokesperson Myer Hutchinson said the burglars took a few municipal-marked tools, including an air wrench and some well-worn mechanic's coveralls from the shop.

He said the total value was "well below \$1,000."

Since then, the city has installed metal bars on the windows and altered the doors to make it more difficult to break in, Hutchinson said.

He said officials are looking at installing surveillance camera and alarm systems at street and fleet maintenance buildings, as well as different types of lighting.

Castro said it's the first time to her knowledge that the entire police car fleet has had its keys changed. She said she wasn't sure why the issue hadn't come to the department's attention before.

She called it a "small investment" to be made for peace of mind.

"If something ever even came close to happening like this in the future, we won't have to sweat it," Castro said.

The Assembly is expected discuss the bill and the locksmith contract at its Tuesday night meeting.

Correction: An earlier version of this story misstated the date that Mayor Ethan Berkowitz signed a waiver to speed up the contract process. It was April 21, not April 2.

COMMENTS(19)

Brady Ridgefield

9 hours ago

You'd think the keys would be secured better inside the building & it sounds like the work of

an ex employee. They probably new right where the keys were & trashed the place to make it look like they weren't after anything specific.

nosev

9 hours ago

*knew

Brady Ridgefield

7 hours ago

No kidding, oh my god I made a typo.

Marty Brooks

7 hours ago

*God,

Brady Ridgefield

6 hours ago

Meds

Mr. McGibblets

10 hours ago

This sure sounds like a solution in search of a problem.

There is a reason that fleet cars have a fleet key. It is not uncommon for an officer to have the need to move another officer's car. No worries, just carry a really big key ring with a couple hundred keys.

James Mason 771

21 hours ago

Are we talking about a tire shop owned by the City of Anchorage?

Kris Langlely

16 hours ago

Yes. This is the facility where Muni-owned vehicles have Spring/Winter tire changeovers, and where tire repair/replacements are taken care of.

Nick Travis

12 hours ago

How embarrassing, the cops getting ripped off. Great use of taxpayer money.

Clinton Bates

8 hours ago

Have they changed the Vandalizing Rule? In my youth, we didn't need a cop key to key or re-key a cop car!

Mike Hefley

14 hours ago

What a gross waste of taxpayer money!! It's looneys at our muni who continue to fritter away our money and who will make life in Anchorage that much harder for everyone.

CORams

9 hours ago

Improving officer safety will make living in anchorage harder? Please explain

Wavemaker

23 hours ago

Oh nice. Tell the burglar/thief what s(he) got away with and how they can come back and continue their vandalism and theft.

Jack Wright

15 hours ago

\$139,756 seems like a lot doesn't it? How much a rig is that? Just curious.

Opinion of CS

12 hours ago

A bit over \$349 per car. Do you own a calculator? Just sayin'.

Bill Hutchison

6 hours ago

I'd recommend Hyundai locks, if I was in charge of the lock changes.

Emmanuel Goldstein

20 hours ago

"The Anchorage Police Department is paying nearly \$140,000 to change the locks on its entire fleet of patrol cars after someone broke into a city tire shop in early April and exposed a security weakness — some cop cars have the same keys. "

Whew! Now maybe APD can turn its attention to enforcing the traffic laws in Anchorage. It's not talked about much but deaths involving motor vehicles is one of the biggest killers of citizens in Anchorage. APD goes after drugs and gangs thinking that makes for better PR - but to what end when public safety is involved? I'm not worried about drug dealers much when I walk and watch so many folks roll their cars through stop signs and red lights and fly past me at 1.5X the legal speed limit. Hey ADN how about some reporting and statistics on how many folks are injured/killed because of motor vehicle (MV) accidents and how much it costs us? What are the stats for MV tickets in ANC compared to other cities of similar size; is APD keeping us safe?

Johnny Mabry

10 hours ago

No mention of the fact this was a no-bid contract Ethan awarded to the most expensive contractor he could find in an attempt to keep the whole mess a secret, or the fact that that contractors competitors all publicly stated they could have done the same job for at least 40% less than the city is paying? Figures.

CORams

9 hours ago

Source?

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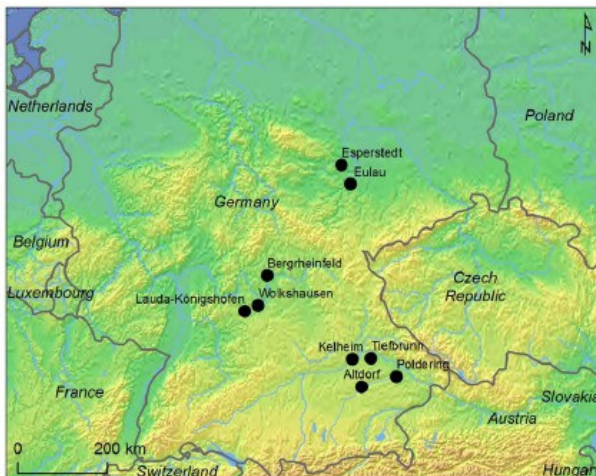
Study indicates Corded Ware Culture women married outside social group

pasthorizonspr.com



The Corded Ware Culture is archaeologically defined by material traits, such as the burial of the dead under barrows alongside characteristic cord-ornamented pottery, and existed in much of Europe from ca. 2800-2200 cal. B.C. To better understand this culture, researchers undertook a study which is published in *PLOS ONE* (open access). They examined human bones and teeth from seven sites in Southern Germany dating from different periods of Corded Ware culture, including two large cemeteries. They used carbon dating and additional dietary isotope analysis to assess the diet and mobility of the population during this period.

Karl-Göran Sjögren from Göteborg University, Sweden, and colleagues found great dietary variation both between and within sites, indicating that the people of the Corded Ware culture subsisted in a variety of ways. Like humans in earlier cultures, they consumed both animal and plant matter. However, it is likely that at least some sites practised more intense dairy and arable farming than in previous periods. Around 42% of individuals buried in one of the large cemetery sites were found to be non-local, with many females likely to have originated from elsewhere. This result may indicate that women across generations in this culture were very mobile.



Location of sampled sites and other CW sites mentioned in the text. Map by K-G Sjögren, using public domain data.

The authors suggest that their evidence of varied diet and mobility supports the possibility of a stable system of female exogamy, where women married outside of their social group and moved to their husbands' settlements, in Corded Ware Culture.

Karl-Göran Sjögren notes: *"Our results suggest that Corded Ware groups in southern Germany were highly mobile, especially the women. We interpret this as indicating a pattern of female exogamy, involving different groups with differing economic strategies, and suggesting a complex pattern of social exchange and economic diversity in Late Neolithic Europe."*

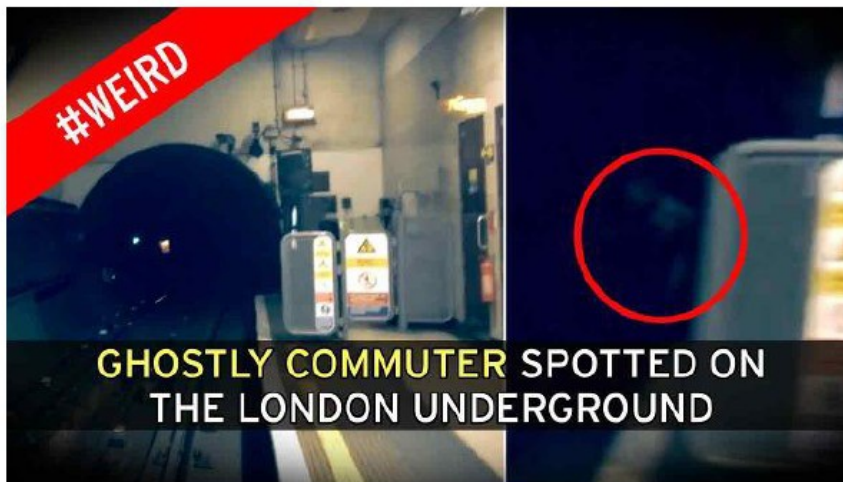
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Does spooky footage show 'crouching ghost' in Tube tunnel?

10:42, 3 Jun 2016 Updated 10:47, 3 Jun 2016 By Keyan Milanian

mirror.co.uk

'Crouching ghost' spotted in Knightsbridge Tube tunnel near 17th century burial pit for plague victims



Ghostly figure spotted on London Underground

It handles millions of passengers every day as one of the world's busiest transport networks.

Now more than 150-years-old, the Tube is thought to hide some of London's greatest secrets.

And one passenger appears to have stumbled on one of them after he apparently filmed a ghost at a station.

The short clip, filmed at Knightsbridge station, west London, was taken by an unidentified man as he waited for a train.

He films along the platform as he appears to wait for a train.



YouTube/FacelessKnights

The apparition appears to lean and look over the tracks

But, as he spins the camera around, a spectre can be seen just inside the tunnel.

Read more: Inside the bunker where boy, 7, survived after being left alone in woods

It seems to crouch at the entrance to the tunnel, lean over the tracks and then hide

behind the barriers.

The footage appears to show a ghost crouching in the tunnel

The track between Knightsbridge and South Kensington stations curves sharply, reportedly so it avoids a 17th century burial pit for leprosy victims.



YouTube/FacelessKnights

According to historic-uk.com, a small plague pit dating from around 1664 is thought to have been used as a burial ground for those who died at the nearby Knightsbridge lazarette.

Knightsbridge Tube Station

A number of Tube stations are said to be haunted, including Bank, Liverpool Street, Aldgate and King's

Cross.

In 2000, night workers at Liverpool Street reported spotting a ghost on CCTV walking along one of the station's platforms.

Paranormal activity



Google Maps



Ghost baby
Teenage



poltergeist 'Grim reaper' spotted Supermarket spirit Horse-riding spook Sir Walter, is that you? A hooded figure Graveyard ghost

However, when one of the shift workers went down to investigate he could see nothing while a colleague claimed he was stood right beside the apparition.

When the pair went to investigate together they found a mysterious pair of white overalls lying on the platform.

Comments

(3)



19 hours ago
BarrySteers
FFS, what a crock....
20 hours ago
TubeGhost
Piccawillies Line?
20 hours ago
TubeGhost
Baker-woo line?

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HUFFPOST WEIRD NEWS

Now, you don't have to settle for the lesser evil.

06/02/2016 02:46 am ET



mppriv via Getty Images A voter casts a ballot for Cthulhu in the 2016 presidential election.

When Bill Kristol, editor of the conservative "Weekly Standard," said over the weekend that an independent candidate would be entering the race for president, this probably wasn't what he had in mind.

Filmmaker Guillermo del Toro responded to Kristol's tweet by suggesting that Cthulhu seek the highest office in the land:

pic.twitter.com/GonIPxQeeh

— Guillermo del Toro (@RealGDT)
June 1, 2016

The "Pacific Rim" director followed that up with a series of tweets making it clear where he stands, and it's as a devoted but ultimately doomed follower of author H.P. Lovecraft's most enduring creation:

pic.twitter.com/eTmHwTfWvf

— Guillermo del Toro (@RealGDT) June 1, 2016

The hunger for an independent choice, even a dead/dreaming Old One that would drive all mankind into madness, appeared to be very real, given the replies:

@RealGDT I'd vote for Cthulhu! pic.twitter.com/dfnSUufUnE

— Hayley Fae Rust (@therustyunicorn) June 1, 2016

@RealGDT "Why settle for the LESSER of two evils?"

— Doc Webb (@The_Doc_Webb) June 1, 2016

@RealGDT totally agree. He's got my vote! 💎💎 pic.twitter.com/O4bQcOtOTu

— ♯Laura Wicca♯ (@Laura_Wicca) June 1, 2016

@RealGDT Finally! A candidate we can all bow down to! #Cthulhu #nolivesmatter

— Mar Rivera (@MutieMar) June 1, 2016

I'm writing this in... "Guillermo del Toro endorses Cthulhu for President" <https://t.co/LCLOWyJB0C>

— Mark Rodriguez (@MLux65) June 2, 2016

@RealGDT But was he born in America? Gonna need a birth certificate! 💎💎

— Sean (@SeanOfKrypton) June 1, 2016

@RealGDT I'm not a crook! pic.twitter.com/hOlvmF7cVo

— Señor Cthulhu (@Viejo_Cthulhu) June 1, 2016

@RealGDT MAKE INSANITY GREAT AGAIN!

— Fleischer-Bot (@Employee_427) June 1, 2016

Although there are a number of online efforts backing Cthulhu for president, most appear aimed at selling T-shirts.

At least, we should probably hope that's their only aim.

Ph'nglui mglw'nafh Cthulhu R'lyeh wgah'nagl fhtagn.

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Cops: Lost couple cuts chain to enter nuclear plant property

May 29, 2016

yahoo.com

DELTA, Pa. (AP) — A couple who got lost in Pennsylvania while driving to New York entered the property of a nuclear plant by cutting a chain at a gate, apparently in a quest to get back on the right road, authorities said.

The Chesapeake, Virginia, couple were driving from Baltimore on Friday night when they got onto an access road at the Peach Bottom Atomic Power Station, owned by Exelon. The driver told police he didn't see two "No trespassing" signs when he cut the chain on the gate, The York Daily Record (<http://bit.ly/27XVuF5>) reported.

Exelon spokeswoman Krista Merkel said the couple never posed a threat to the plant and security was monitoring them the entire time they were on plant property.

"It seemed they inadvertently made it to our property and were trying to find their way back out," Merkel said. "They thought the only way they could get back was to cut the fence."

Police initially said, after consulting with security staff, that the man and woman appeared to have made it to "a highly security sensitive area where radioactive material is transferred from the main power plant. If the couple had gone inside a nearby outbuilding, the plant would have been placed on lockdown and there was a "possibility of lethal force being used," authorities said in court documents.

But Merkel said Saturday that the couple hadn't made it to any areas where radioactive materials are transferred or stored and didn't make it past security officers who constantly monitor all sides of the plant. She said the couple was "very cooperative" and waited until police arrived.

Nuclear Regulatory Commission spokeswoman Diane Screnci also said there was no threat to the plant or harm done to equipment, and officials believe "security at the plant is appropriate."

Nuclear plants have at least two resident inspectors from the agency who watch things like work activity, and the inspectors may go in on Tuesday to go over the arrest and what happened, Screnci said.

The couple was charged with trespassing. The woman was also charged with possession of a controlled substance. Police said she had a small metal pipe that smelled like marijuana.

Information from: York Daily Record, <http://www.ydr.com>

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Leonardo da Vinci's Living Descendants Have Been Found atlasobscura.com

Historians say they've uncovered nearly three dozen.

by Erik Shilling

April 15, 2016



An engraving of da Vinci by Everard Hansen.
(Photo: Svenska Familj-Journalen/Public Domain)
An engraving of da Vinci by Everard Hansen.
(Photo: Svenska Familj-Journalen/Public Domain)

Historians claimed this week to have found the living descendants of Renaissance artist Leonardo da Vinci, after tracing the famous artist's genealogy through the centuries.

There are nearly three dozen, the historians say, including an architect and Oscar-nominated director Franco Zeffirelli.

The descendants will likely never be positively confirmed because da Vinci's body was lost in the years after he died (there's a tomb for him in France, but it has never been confirmed that the remains inside are his). The historians, instead, used documents like estate papers to connect the dots of da Vinci's family, according to the *Guardian*.

Zeffirelli's 1968 film version of *Romeo and Juliet* netted him his only Oscar nomination. He later claimed that he was a descendant of da Vinci while receiving an award in Italy in 2007. Many people, the *Guardian* says, thought it was a joke.

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This artist wants you to send her dead bees, please

2016/06/01

cbc.ca

CBC.ca

Hundreds of Canadians have mailed Ruth Marsh dead bugs, and you can keep 'em coming

Leah Collins · CBC Arts June 1, 2016



Oh no, not the bees. Yes, Ruth Marsh wants you to send them to her. The Halifax artist has collected 400 specimens from people around the country, and 300 of her taxidermy "cyborg" bees are now on display at Calgary's The New Gallery. (Facebook/May I Have Your Bees Please?)

Ruth Marsh wants you to mail her dead bees.

If nothing else, that request makes a hell of a conversation starter, and that's perfect, because that's ultimately what this Halifax artist is out to do.

"Bees are a good place to start when you want to talk to people about the environment," says Marsh, "and in a way that's hopefully playful and funny and fun and hopefully engaging."

"There's an awful lot of cultural affection that people have for bees," she says. They're

fascinating, they're beautiful — "at least, I think so," says Marsh, and after graduating from NSCAD in 2006, the multi-disciplinary artist found herself habitually painting and drawing the creatures in works exploring themes of ecological crisis.

Bees and other pollinating species are dying out, disappearing at such an alarming rate that the United Nations issued an international call to action in February, demanding change before the world's food supply is endangered.

When you consider news like that, news we've been hearing for years, a world without bees is a very possible reality, and it's one Marsh explores in *Ideal Bounds*, an exhibition currently on display at The New Gallery in Calgary before travelling to more cities around the country later this year.

Visit the show, and you'll be inside a natural history museum of the near future — the year 2050, let's say.

In Marsh's imagination, bees have been extinct for years, but there were a few man-made interventions before they all died out. Science gave cyborg bees a try, for instance. And under a variety of glass bell jars, you'll find 300 of these technologically enhanced bees — taxidermy specimens tricked out with shiny found objects, each one meticulously altered by Marsh under risk of stinging.

"It was a funny thing to learn how to do by myself. There was definitely a lot of trial and error," Marsh laughs, talking about bee taxidermy. A detailed video of her process is included as part of the show: "Bee Taxidermy: A How To Guide," a nine-minute clip that teaches you how to "prepare for a world without bees."

Every bee in *Ideal Bounds* is real, and every bee has a story — and it's all thanks to hundreds of Canadians.



(Christina Arsenault/www.ruthmarsh.ca)



(Christina Arsenault/www.ruthmarsh.ca)



(Christina Arsenault/www.ruthmarsh.ca)



(Facebook/May I Have Your Bees Please?)

Through her Facebook page — the whimsically titled *May I Have Your Bees, Please?* — Marsh has been crowdsourcing dead insects since 2010 in addition to regularly sharing news and research about the creature's plight.

Should you find a recently deceased bee — and it should

really be a found bee, not a pest you recently dispatched with a newspaper — send her a message.

In reply, she will mail you a package with everything you need to participate. You'll receive a container (for the bee), a self-addressed stamped envelope (for mailing the bee) and a hand-drawn gift as a token of thanks (it will, most likely, be a picture of a bee).

You'll also get a short questionnaire asking this: How do you think it died?

The responses, along with the bees, have been collected for *Ideal Bounds*. "Sometimes people will write me stories," Marsh says, funny messages inspired by the whimsical nature of the project. Other people are more serious, she explains. "Beekeepers will, you know, tell it like it is."

At this point, Marsh has received more than 400 insects from people around the country who've largely discovered the project through word-of-mouth. Marsh says she's supplied various artist-run centres with her bee kits, and she'd like to "reach out to some conservation agencies" as partners, as well.

More recently, the project has evolved to include stop-motion animation. Making films with her bees is Marsh's current focus, and she's begun to re-make each bee with fully articulated limbs. They're the stars of a short film, also called *"Ideal Bounds,"* which she is currently submitting to festivals. By winter, she hopes to produce a longer-format piece.

"Not only am I repairing them one at a time, but I'm bringing them back to life in whatever way that I can," she says of her re-animated hive. "I'm taking a Mary Shelley approach to the whole thing."

Ruth Marsh. *Ideal Bounds*. To June 25 at The New Gallery, Calgary. www.thenewgallery.org.



Some of Ruth Marsh's bee kits, ready for mailing. (Facebook/May I Have Your Bees Please?)



Bee-movie? Ruth Marsh has been using bees like these as stop-motion animation puppets. (Facebook/May I Have Your Bees Please?)



(Christina Arsenault/www.ruthmarsh.ca)

CBC/Radio-Canada. All rights reserved



Inside Ideal Bounds at Calgary's The New Gallery. (Su Ying Strang/The New Gallery)

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'Possessed' woman rushed to hospital as devil voice says: "She is going to HELL"

12:08, 4 Jun 2016 Updated 21:34, 4 Jun 2016 By Scott Campbell

mirror.co.uk

Delirious 'possessed' woman rushed to hospital as devil voice within her says: "She is going to HELL"



This is the terrifying moment a delirious woman believed to be possessed by a demon spirit shakes violently as friends desperately try to calm her down.

The woman, named as Carmela, can be seen lurching backwards and forwards on a stretcher as her eyes roll into the back of her head.

'Possessed' woman rants about the devil as she's rushed to hospital in ambulance

Another person in the ambulance dressed in white and speaking in Spanish attempts to wake her by clapping and calling her name.

But she replies in a hoarse demonic voice saying: "She is going to hell."



YouTube / SaitanCovers Becker

The woman speaks in a hoarse demonic voice in the video

As a woman off camera begs her to stop, the voice continues: "This girl doesn't exist now. It doesn't exist."

Those in the ambulance are left puzzled by the bizarre sequence of events, with one asking: "Is she giving birth?"



She was being rushed to hospital in an ambulance with sirens blaring

In the same strained voice, Carmela, who is hooked up to an intravenous drip, replies: "My father is coming for him. He is mine. He is for me."

The terrifying incident was captured in the back of an ambulance as it sped to hospital with its sirens blaring.

It comes after surveillance cameras in

YouTube / SaitanCovers Becker

a supermarket caught a woman dropping to her knees and screaming amid claims she was possessed by a demon.

In the CCTV footage, a middle-aged woman, dressed in dark clothes, walks into shot carrying items in an aisle offering blankets, duvets and pillows.

As she reaches the middle of the aisle, a package begins rocking on one of the shelves behind her and eventually falls to the floor.

She turns around, notices the packet on the floor and puts it back on the shelf.

But just as she does so, she suddenly drops her shopping.

A man approaches and places a hand on her shoulder, but the woman lets out a blood-curdling scream, throwing the other shoppers back.



YouTube

Moments after replacing the item on the shelf she appears to be jolted by an unseen power

He then grabs her by both arms, calls for help from a shop worker and another shopper and appears to hold her down.

Next, he places his hands on her head - one on either side of her temple - and appears to perform some sort of ritual or healing method.

The woman calms down and, seconds later, the supermarket tremors as the footage blurs and all five people in the shot are thrown back again.

Eventually, they recover and lead the older woman off.



© MGN Limited

'Possessed' woman rants about the devil as she's rushed to hospital in ambulance

Dies at Behest of Baby Ghost (1907)

wordpress.com

<https://tidingsofyore.wordpress.com/2016/04/26/dies-at-behest-of-baby-ghost-1907/>

Misc. Tidings of Yore

Forgotten Lore & Historical Curiosities

Dies at Behest of Baby Ghost (1907)

There were a handful of clippings from newspapers across the country in 1907 reporting that Mrs. Daniel Clauer of Springfield, Ohio died after repeatedly seeing visions of her niece's ghost.

The Paducah Evening Sun printed part of a conversation between Mrs. Clauer and her daughter, Mrs. Yost:

"Alice has been calling and beckoning to me for a month and now that Daniel is gone there is no reason that I should not go to be with them."

DIES AT BEHEST OF BABY GHOST

Ohio Woman Expires After Stopping
Call From Spectral World.

Springfield, O., March 22.—No pointed visitations from the ghost of her baby niece, Alice, who died last fall, are believed to have been the cause of the death of Mrs. Daniel Clauer, who was found expiring in her bed this morning.

Mrs. Clauer's family had been troubled by death no less than seven times in the last two years. She was in feeble health herself and the death of her husband and sister weighed upon her mind. She bore up bravely, however, until last fall, when death took her niece, to whom she was greatly attached.

Five weeks ago her husband, who was night engineer at the Ohio Old Fellows' Home in this city, was found dead, his body lying between the boilers in the engine room. It was soon after this that she told her daughter, Mrs. Yost, that she had seen a vision of her niece, surrounded by angels, and the baby hand beckoned to her. These visions continued by night and day.

"Alice has been calling and beckoning to me for a month," she said to her daughter, "and now that Daniel is gone there is no reason why I should not go to be with them."

The Paducah Evening Sun,
March 25, 1907

As usual, the specifics of the fantastical story vary among papers. Some accounts listed Mary Clauer's age as 40 when she was actually 56 when she died according to Ohio's Clark County Death Records Index.

The spectral niece's name was reported in one paper as Alice who'd died in the fall of 1906. Other articles listed the ghost as Marie or Mary Grasia who passed away the week before Mary Clauer's death.

I couldn't find death records for Alice, Mary, or Marie so whether Mrs. Clauer was allegedly haunted by one ghost or saw visions of different nieces remains a mystery.

Mrs. Daniel Clauer, aged 40, was found dead at her home in Springfield, Ohio. She was apparently in good health the previous day, but became badly frightened and startled her relatives by declaring that she saw the ghost of her dead niece, Mary Grasia, who died a week ago. It is believed Mrs. Clauer was scared to death.

Shenandoah Herald, April 19, 1907

Mary's husband Daniel died Feb. 10, 1907 as the result of an accident, so that part of the story is also true.

On March 22, 1907 Mary Clauer died at her residence, 464 N. Limestone, with heart failure as the official cause of death.

It's not impossible that Mrs. Clauer was scared to death. The *Wall Street Journal* discusses stress cardiomyopathy and "broken-heart

syndrome" in the article *Science Shows Even the Fit Can Be Scared to Death*.

Mary Clauer was no stranger to The Reaper, having recently lost her husband, niece, and

WOMAN SEE "GHOST"; DIES

SPRINGFIELD, O., April 6.—Mrs. Daniel Clauer, 40 years old, was found dead at her home here. She was apparently in good health, but became frightened and startled her relatives by declaring that she saw the ghost of her dead niece, Marie Grasia, who died a week ago. Mrs. Clauer's husband, who was engineer at the state Odd Fellows' home, died suddenly 2 weeks ago.

The Spokane Press April 6, 1907

ANSWERED SPIRITS CALL.

**Baby's Ghost Beckoned to Woman
Who Went to Her Grave.**

Hunted by the ghost of her baby niece of whom she had been extremely fond, Mrs. Daniel Clauer of Springfield, Ohio, died, it is believed, in answer to the call of the child. She said the baby came every day and beckoned to her to come.

In the last two years, Mrs. Clauer's family have been invaded by death no less than seven times. One by one her brothers and sister, then her husband, and finally her little niece went to their graves and she felt that there was nothing on earth for her to live for longer.

The Manning Times, May 8, 1907

several other relatives. Her daughter Burton died in August 1885 at age one from spinal meningitis. These losses could've hastened her shuffle off this mortal coil.

Unless otherwise

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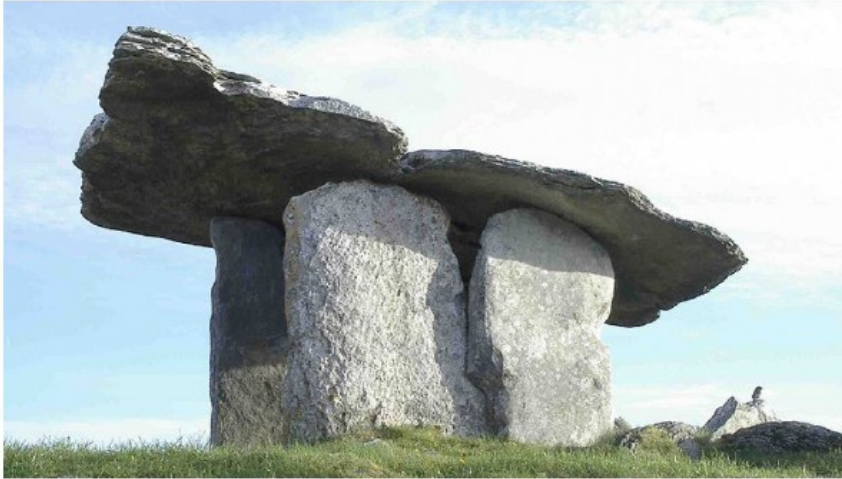
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DNA solves mysteries of ancient Ireland

pri.org

December 30, 2015 · 5:00 PM EST

By Christopher Woolf



The Poulnabrone dolmen (Poll na mBrón in Irish) is a portal tomb in County Clare, Ireland, dating back to the Neolithic period, probably built 5-6000 years ago. Credit: Danny Burke/ Wikimedia Commons

Let's call her 'Maria.'

This story is based on a radio interview. Listen to the full interview.

PRI.org

She's a brown-eyed, brown-haired woman, with a face that would be right at home in the Mediterranean or the Middle East.

And she's Irish.

She lived about 5200 years ago, and was buried near a stone monument and an ancient ring-shaped earthwork, in Ballynahatty, near Belfast. It was her people who built nearly all those megalithic tombs, monuments and stone circles, that you see in advertisements from the Irish tourism industry.

And it's now being suggested that nearly everyone in Ireland at that time looked like Maria, like they were from the Mediterranean. And that's because they were.

The genetic profile of these first Irish farmers indisputably originates in the Middle East. Maria's closest modern relatives — genetically — are the inhabitants of the Italian island of Sardinia.

Maria lived a stone-age existence. Literally. Nearly all her tools and implements were made from natural products like stone and wood. But she was a farmer, meaning she did not rely on hunting and gathering for her food.

Her ancestors may have taken a few centuries to complete the journey from the Middle East to the cold and foggy forests of northern Ireland. The genetic evidence suggests a maritime route, across the Mediterranean, to southern Spain, then up the Atlantic coast.

Maria's DNA has traces of an even older first people in Ireland, people who relied on hunting and gathering for food. But it's only a trace, leading scientists to suggest that Maria's Neolithic farming people displaced and replaced the hunter-gatherers.

But in turn, Maria's DNA is almost entirely absent from the population of modern Ireland. So

this indicates that at some point, Maria's people lost out to a new and very different population.

Three male skeletons provide clues to help scientists explain what happened. They were uncovered on the island of Rathlin, off the coast of Northern Ireland.

Let's call them the Rathlin boys.

The Rathlin boys lived about 1000 years after Maria, and their DNA is very different to hers. Genetically, the lads have a very close affinity to the populations of modern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

They have the code that causes blue eyes, and genetic markers for certain diseases that are common in the Irish to this day. Interestingly their DNA appears to have originated in the steppes of what is now Ukraine and southern Russia, and spread westwards through central Europe to its outermost fringe in Ireland.

No-one is saying for sure that these were Celts. No-one knows what languages these people spoke. But the scientists on the DNA project says the genetic affinity with the modern Irish people "invites the possibility of the introduction of Indo-European, perhaps early Celtic, language" at the time they arrived, around 4300 years ago.

Their remains belong to the Bronze Age, meaning their tools and weapons were metal, rather than stone.

Historians have long known about these great technological shifts in Ireland's history; first, the introduction of agriculture around 5750 years ago, then secondly the advent of metalwork around 4300 years ago. But there's been great debate about what happened to the people.

One popular theory was that the population was pretty stable, and that they adopted new technologies through a process called cultural transfer. That might involve the immigration of a new elite, or perhaps just a few skilled workers.

But the scientists who studied the Rathlin Boys and Maria say the DNA evidence suggests that actually the technological transformations were occasioned by mass migration, and population displacement.

This fits in with DNA evidence from elsewhere in Europe. Oetzi, the famous iceman found in the Alps, is genetically a cousin of Maria's, but their descendants disappeared from most of Europe. Except for Sardinia. For some reason, the descendants of those early Neolithic farmers were left undisturbed on Sardinia.

So did the ancestors of the Rathlin Boys kill off Maria's descendants? It will probably never be known how much violence there was, if any. But it is clear that the wave of newcomers brought a new technology that transformed the economic and agricultural world. This alone probably gave them enough of a competitive demographic edge to overwhelm the original inhabitants. You know, if your stone-age farm can support 2 people per square mile, and your Bronze age farm can support 20, then the genetic odds are in favor of the Bronze age folks.

There may have been some intermarriage and intermixture, but not enough to be demographically or genetically significant.

So if the Bronze Age metalworking boys from the steppes of eastern Europe were indeed the proto-Celts, and started arriving 4300 years ago, then that's centuries after Maria and her Mediterranean-type people built most of those megaliths that we associate with Ireland.

The scientists from Trinity College Dublin and Queen's University Belfast published their findings in the journal, the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, on December 29, 2015.

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Bigger Guns, Bigger Problems? How High-Powered Ammunition Could Affect Nuclear Power Plants

Teri Storza, *The Orange County Register* | May 10, 2016

emergencymgmt.com

Bigger Guns, Bigger Problems? How High-Powered Ammunition Could Affect Nuclear Power Plants

More powerful ammunition meant to protect nuclear reactors was capable of piercing control panels and critical piping.



(Shutterstock)

It was flat but heavy. Inside the bubble pack was a battered steel plate, blasted with dents and holes from semiautomatic weapons fire. Each pockmark and perforation was carefully labeled – by hand, in permanent ink – with the type of ammunition used to produce it.

Security forces at San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station and nuclear plants nationwide had increased their firepower to take on a more formidable terrorist threat. The steel plate, sent by a San Onofre security manager, graphically illustrated what

Lochbaum, a nuclear engineer, considered a potentially devastating, increased risk:

More powerful ammunition meant to protect nuclear reactors was capable of piercing control panels and critical piping.

The concern doesn't appear to have been publicly disclosed at the time, but it resurfaced recently after the Nuclear Regulatory Commission allowed nuclear security forces to override state and local gun control laws and possess high-powered weaponry that would otherwise be banned.

Government documents – provided by the Union of Concerned Scientists, a nonprofit watchdog that keeps a critical eye on the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission in Washington, D.C. – offer a rare glimpse into efforts to secure America's nuclear power plants that occur out of the public eye and the controversies that can simmer behind the scenes.

Critics maintain that not enough is being done to protect plants and the public. Their issue is not whether those guarding nuclear plants should have high-powered weaponry, but about how much additional security training and hardening of facilities should be required to reduce the risk of collateral damage.

An accidental discharge, friendly fire or all-out firefight during a terrorist attack could potentially cripple a working reactor and release dangerous radiation, experts said.

Risks are different at shuttered plants like San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station because there's no reactor core to melt down. But millions of pounds of nuclear waste remain on site, cooled and protected by intricate technologies that sit beyond the thick containment domes.

The NRC has allowed San Onofre to dial back its emergency plans because it no longer splits atoms, a move that many critics opposed. Operating nuclear plants must work up detailed responses to four levels of emergency, but San Onofre owner Southern California Edison no longer has to prepare for the worst

two.

Nuclear power plant security is a nationwide concern. Nearly one-third of Americans – 96 million – live within 50 miles of such facilities, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

‘BIGGER AND BADDER’

Lochbaum, a nuclear engineer with the Union of Concerned Scientists, said the introduction of “bigger and badder weapons” at nuclear plants recalls the unanticipated consequences of ocean-liner safety improvements after the Titanic disaster in 1912.

In 1915, the Great Lakes passenger steamer SS Eastland, which had been prone to listing, was retrofitted with a complete set of lifeboats and crank systems to lower them. The steamer was not designed to hold the extra weight. When passengers congregated on the top deck while the Eastland was tied to a dock in the Chicago River, it rolled over, killing 844 people.

“Are the bigger and badder weaponry less Titanic or more Eastland?” Lochbaum asked.

San Onofre’s security manager after 9/11 was Marty Speer, who had worked for Edison for 20 years when he raised the firepower issue.

Speer didn’t oppose the use of more powerful weaponry to protect the plants, documents show. His concern was that officers get sufficient training to avoid missed shots and inadvertently creating larger problems, no matter which weapons they carried.

He turned to Lochbaum and the UCS because he wasn’t satisfied that plant operator Southern California Edison and federal regulator NRC were taking his concerns seriously, according to the recently released documents.

“I have raised key issues which have the potential to affect the health and safety of the public as well as the physical integrity of the plant,” Speer wrote to the NRC in 2003.

“I recognize SCE will not respond to the concerns raised by me in any meaningful way.”

Both Southern California Edison and the NRC investigated Speer’s concerns, documents show. The NRC’s response was essentially, “Don’t let your security officers miss the bad guys,” said Lochbaum, whose expertise is often sought at congressional hearings on nuclear matters.

An earlier letter to Speer from NRC Senior Allegations Coordinator Russell Wise in 2002 said a review had “concluded that sufficient redundancy and diversity exists in the plant design to make it highly unlikely that a safety function would be lost ... because of the use of high-powered ammunition by security force responders.”

Plant security must defend against attackers whose goal is to damage or disable safety-related equipment, the letter said. Because such attackers would likely be armed with automatic weapons with high-powered ammunition, the guards must have comparable equipment, it said.

The NRC concluded that Speer’s concern that high-powered weapons posed an unacceptable risk to safety-related equipment was not substantiated, and it planned no further action on the matter.

Speer retired in 2012 after 30 years at Edison. He could not be reached for comment for this story.

The ammunition available to security personnel at nuclear plants is more powerful since 9/11. But NRC

spokesman Eric Stahl said the types of weapons haven't changed much. Security officers must be trained on any weapons they carry and must "qualify" with their weapons annually, he said.

"It is recognized that 'friendly fire' could damage some plant equipment should it be struck by weapons fire; however, every effort is made to avoid such incidents," Stahl said.

FIRING RANGE

Since 2001, the NRC has required more training and higher qualification standards for security personnel, he said. Guards must qualify each year with a nationally recognized firing course, earning at least 70 percent of the maximum score for revolvers and semiautomatic pistols and 80 percent of the maximum score for semiautomatic rifles, according to the NRC's published criteria.

A Southern California Edison representative said San Onofre has never had an instance of a security officer inadvertently firing a weapon at plant equipment.

All "live fire" training and qualification occurs at a firing range about 10 miles from San Onofre and meets or exceeds all NRC requirements, said spokeswoman Maureen Brown.

"San Onofre's security program is set up to minimize weapon handling while at the plant, and when weapons are carried, they are carried in the safest possible condition for the situation," she said.

When new weaponry is introduced at San Onofre, Edison conducts an analysis that considers the type of ammunition, fields of fire, location of vital equipment, potential adversary routes and security officer training.

"The strategy is designed so sufficient equipment is protected to ensure public health and safety," Brown said.

Concerns remain, however.

"We have upgraded security at America's nuclear plants and made it much harder for bad guys to cause mayhem, and that's good," Lochbaum said. "But there's all kinds of equipment that could inadvertently be damaged, and not much training on what security officers should try not to hit."

One simple approach is to reinforce control panels, hallways adjacent to sensitive systems and the like with thicker steel that can withstand higher-powered ammunition.

"There are a lot of things not being done, that can be done, to better protect these plants," Lochbaum said.

Environmentalist Gene Stone, who runs Residents Organized For a Safe Environment in San Clemente, would like to see nuclear security embrace the next wave of high-tech weaponry.

"There are rounds that will go through one thing, but they will not go through a second thing, because they break up and are no longer viable," said Stone, who served on San Onofre's Community Engagement Panel, advising Edison on decommissioning. "Obviously, nuclear safety has to be taken extremely seriously in the crazy world we live in today."

'NIMBLE, LETHAL' FOE

With an eye to growing terrorist threats, Daniel Hirsch, director of the Program on Environmental and Nuclear Policy at UC Santa Cruz, has been pushing the NRC to upgrade security at nuclear power plants since the early 1980s.

Over the years, federal regulators have increased security requirements, he said: Plants must be ready to repel truck bombs as well as teams of attackers who infiltrate on foot. But protections against some other types of attacks, such as by air and sea, are lagging, Hirsch said.

"Over the decades of dealing with the NRC, the pattern has never changed," he said. "I've never seen them ahead of the risk rather than behind it. The NRC sees its job as keeping the burden low on the nuclear industry. This is an exceedingly dangerous mismatch between a captured regulatory agency and an adversary that is nimble, lethal and has absolutely no compunction."

Anti-nuclear activist Roger Johnson, a retired psychology professor in San Clemente, said he believes cost is a major consideration in plant security programs.

The NRC's approach has been to guard against a few armed intruders, like a bank holdup, he said. "They will say with a straight face that they are secure. What they mean is that they have 100 percent of the security that is required – which is very little."

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Dozens of teachers and pupils 'pinned down by evil spirits' as mystery 'body possession' epidemic sweeps through school

06:14, 19 Apr 2016

thesun.co.uk

Dozens of teachers and pupils 'pinned down by evil spirits' as mystery 'body possession' epidemic sweeps through school

A MASS hysteria epidemic has spread through schools in Malaysia as students and teachers claim visions of female vampire ghosts and possession by evil spirits.

The "body possession phenomenon" has led to a school shutting down and one group of 20 female students being sent home.

Yesterday reporters were denied entry to one school but could hear blood-curdling screams from inside the classrooms.



Ghostly figure

Those affected witness a "ponitianak", a female vampire ghost popular in Malaysian folklore Getty

Education chiefs in the Kota Baru region have now resorted to shamans and religious leaders in an effort to clear the schools of "bad spirits."

Those affected by the hysteria are overwhelmed by evil spirits and apparently witness a "ponitianak", a female vampire ghost popular in Malaysian folklore.

They are believed to be the spirits of women who died while giving birth and return to prey on men.

Watch: Brutal bare-knuckle fight between two men as women cheer on at a country fair in Kent

Tragedy as four-month-old baby girl dies on board a Cathay Pacific flight from London to Hong Kong

Man arrested on suspicion of murdering six-year-old boy more than 20 years ago in notorious cold case

At SMK Pengkalan Chepa 2 secondary school, 100 teachers reported seeing a black figure.

One of them, Norlailawati Ramli, told Free Malaysia Today: "When I was holding one of the pupils, my arms felt extraordinarily heavy. I recited the istighfar.

"Things were truly out of control at the time. But after the pupil recovered and went home, I then felt as though someone was hanging on to the left side of my body. I saw flashes of black, like a black figure."



Kota-Baru-Malaysia

Education chiefs in the Kota Baru region have now resorted to shamans and religious leaders Wikipedia

Another teacher also saw the black figure and felt like her head was "bloating" from the sheer terror.

Professor Datuk Dr Wazir Jahan Karim told the Star Online that the female students were highly stressed and the mass hysteria was a "syndrome of some acute fear."

Wiru Sankala, a traditional medicine expert, told the Straits Times that hot weather and earlier reports of hysteria were perpetuating the problem.

SMALLER harbours are being targeted as they are not protected by border officials

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Astro Awani

Dracula: Cruel, Ruthless And Bloodthirsty Ruler But Not A Vampire

| MessageToEagle.com

messagetoeagle.com



April 30, 2016

MessageToEagle.com – Dracula did in fact exist. However, he was not a bloodthirsty vampire but a Prince in Wallachia, a part in present-day southern Romania.

His real name was Vlad III, but he was often called Dracula. Romania is full of ancient tales of the supernatural and legends of the unexplained and these stories have long influenced our imagination.



Vlad used severe methods to restore order in a lawless state. He also had the courage to drive the occupation force, the Ottomans out of the country. But Vlad had a dark side... too.

It is very likely that the Irish author Bram Stoker borrowed Vlad's name for his Transylvanian count in the book "Dracula" from 1897. We have to remember that 'Dracula' is literally translated in Gaelic as *Drac Ullah, which means 'bad blood'.*

Vlad lived between 1431 and 1476 and is regarded a national hero in his home country. He was considered a brutal and yet fair ruler.

During the 15th century there was a struggle to obtain control of Wallachia, a region of the Balkans (Romania) which lay directly between the two powerful forces of Hungary and the Ottoman Empire. The power of the Ottomans seemed unstoppable. Vlad used severe methods to restore order in a lawless state. He also had the courage to drive the occupation force, the Ottomans out of the country.

But Vlad had a dark side... too.

He was delighted in torture and executions.

He was famous for slowly driving a pole through the body of his enemies while they were still alive. Vlad was a very cruel man and his "methods" were brutal. Impalement was and is one of the most gruesome ways of dying.

It often took hours, and in some cases even days before the poor victim died on the pole. Later, the pole and the victim's body were put on public display. This horrifying sight was meant to serve as a warning to all Ottomans as well as different type of criminals, like thieves, murderers and others.

Dracula was feared by his enemies and he was given the nickname *Tepes*, meaning the impaler.

The origin of the name Dracula has not yet been entirely confirmed. "Drac" means "devil" in the Romanian language and the ending "-uela" means "son of". We can assume that Vlad's nickname was "Son of the Devil".

Still, we must not forget another very important aspect related to the origin of Vlad's name.

In 1431, Vlad's father was a member of the Order of the Dragon, a secret order of knights meant to protect the royal family from the invading Ottomans Turks.



Dracula was feared by his enemies and he was given the nickname Tepes, meaning the impaler.

The dragon was considered a symbol of the devil. Therefore, Vlad's name can simply mean "Son of the Dragon" or "Son of the Devil."

It is unknown why Bram Stoker used the name Dracula in his book, but there are two theories. In 1890, Stoker borrowed the book "An Account of the Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia", which was written back in 1820 by William Wilkinson. This book contained many descriptions of Dracula's life. Perhaps Stoker used this

book as a source and inspiration for his novel.

Another possibility is that Stoker learned about Dracula through his friend Professor Arminius Vambery who he visited on several occasions in Budapest. Stoker mixed the history of Dracula's life with folktales of vampires and it resulted in a classical book which is popular until today.

Dracula was a cruel, ruthless and bloodthirsty ruler, but he was not a vampire. In Romania, he is considered national symbol of fight for independence against ottomans.

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BYU student believes she drank professor's urine for extra credit

fox13now.com

Posted 10:24 pm, May 31, 2016, by Matt McDonald, Updated at 10:09am, June 1, 2016



PROVO, Utah -- A classroom prank some BYU students say crossed the line. A student drank what she thought was her professor's urine as part of a lesson on kidney function. The student got extra credit for slugging back a small vial.

"I think that's asking too much of students and it has nothing to do with how well we study or how well we actually know physiology," said a student in the class who filmed the incident.

Professor Jason Hansen teaches the class. He posted a note to his students three days after it happened. It reads in part: "Please rest assured that it was not really urine but rather food coloring and diluted vinegar."

In a statement sent to FOX 13 News, Hansen wrote that he has done this in the past with other classes, usually letting everyone in on the gag when the class next meets. He notes, part of the lesson is discussing how doctors once tasted the urine of their patients to screen for things like diabetes.

While all of the students who discussed the prank with FOX 13 News wanted to remain anonymous, many expressed their doubts. Hansen's explanation came after FOX 13 News contacted him.

A noted posted by a teaching assistant posted the day after the class reads, "I didn't catch the name of the person that volunteered yesterday to drink Dr. Hansen's pee."

"She could have said no but at the same time, I feel like that was a disadvantage to me and the rest of the students who didn't want to drink his urine," said one student.

Hansen gave us this statement about the class lesson earlier in the week. Wednesday, Hansen's department chair at BYU confirmed that, while the demonstration does teach some critical aspects of kidney function, they've asked the professor not to repeat the exercise.

The exercise we did in class where we used fake urine to illustrate principles of hydration and dehydration. The color of your urine dictates how well your body conserves water. The darker the urine, the more your body is trying to conserve water. The fake urine was used to illustrate that purpose. Furthermore, physicians used to drink urine to determine various metabolic diseases by the taste, including determining how sweet it was for as diagnosis of diabetes. In class, we used the fake urine for this purpose. I asked a student if they were willing to try some of the fake urine. She agreed. I agreed that we would both try it. I have done this in the past with no complaints. Later, usually the next class, I tell them that it was fake. This is usually a fun way to teach this concept to the class and was not intended to offend anyone. After getting your email on Saturday, I did send a message to everyone letting them know that it was indeed fake.

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Denmark project pairs drones and ladybirds - BBC News

bbc.com



Denmark project pairs drones and ladybirds

By News from Elsewhere... ...as found by BBC Monitoring

• 2 June 2016

Danish researchers are developing an insect-dropping "eco-drone" for use in organic farming.

They're working on a device that can disperse ladybirds and predatory mites over organic crops to gobble up aphids and other pests, the FodevareWatch website reports. Researchers say one aim is to make organic farming easier and reduce the amount of crops lost to pest damage, ultimately bringing down prices for consumers.

But dropping insects from the sky isn't straightforward, even if some of them can fly. "The challenge is to develop a spreader that can spread the insects without destroying them," says Associate Prof Søren Wiatr Borg from the University of Southern Denmark (SDU). "They need to eat the pests before they themselves end up as bird food."

SDU is collaborating with Aarhus University and technology company Ecobotix on the project, which has received 8.4m kroner (\$1.3m; £870,000) in funding from the Danish government.

Initially the project will focus on strawberry fields, orchards and Christmas tree plantations, because they cover a relatively small area, but the team thinks the drone could be used on a much bigger scale. "Previously, it has been difficult and far too expensive to use nature's own pest control methods on large areas, but by using the drones it is now possible," Prof Borg says.

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Electric eels make leaping attacks: Research confirms 200-year-old story by Alexander von Humboldt

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Research confirms 200-year-old story by Alexander von Humboldt

Date:

June 6, 2016

Source:

Vanderbilt University

Summary:

A biologist has accidentally discovered that electric eels can make leaping attacks that dramatically increase the strength of the electric shocks they deliver and, in so doing, has confirmed a 200-year-old observation by famous 19th century explorer and naturalist Alexander von Humboldt.



Credit: Kenneth Catania, Vanderbilt University

In a legendary account the famous 19th century explorer and naturalist Alexander von Humboldt recounted a dramatic battle between horses

and electric eels that he witnessed on a field trip to the Amazon. In the following 200 years, however, there have been no scientific reports of similar behavior on the part of the eels, suggesting that perhaps von Humboldt exaggerated.

Last year, Vanderbilt University biologist Kenneth Catania accidentally discovered that, under certain conditions, the electric eels that he has been studying will react even more dramatically than von Humboldt described: When cornered by a threatening object that is partially submerged, they will often attack by raising up out of the water, pressing their chin against the object's side and administering a series of powerful electrical shocks.

Catania, who is the Stevenson Professor of Biological Sciences, has included a description of this behavior, an assessment of its effectiveness and an explanation of the evolutionary

advantages it provides the eels in the paper "Leaping eels electrify threats supporting von Humboldt's account of a battle with horses," published online this week in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* early edition.

"The first time I read von Humboldt's tale, I thought it was completely bizarre," said Catania. "Why would the eels attack the horses instead of swimming away?"

The biologist keeps the eels he studies in large tanks. Initially, he used a net with metal rim and handle to transfer the eels from one place to another. "In hindsight, it probably wasn't the best design to use with electric eels," he acknowledged. However, it was a serendipitous choice. As he scooped up the larger eels he found that every so often, an eel would stop trying to evade the net and attack it by leaping out of the water while pressing its chin to the handle, all the while generating a series of high-voltage pulses. (He was wearing rubber gloves so he didn't get shocked.)

In a previous study, Catania found that eels interpret small conductors as prey. In the case of the metal-rimmed net, the eels seem to interpret the large conductor emerging from the water as a potential predator. Catania described the eel's defensive behavior as "both literally and figuratively shocking."

Catania's previous research has also shown that when eels attack a free-swimming fish, they hit it with a high-frequency volley of millisecond pulses that don't fry the fish, but instead stimulate the nerves that control its muscles and cause them to contract -- freezing up the prey with the same mechanism of a TASER. Of course, like a TASER, the eel's pulses inevitably activate sensory nerves that cause pain. Causing pain is not so useful for catching prey, but like an electric fence, it is just the ticket for deterring a predator.

Catania designed a series of experiments specifically to determine what is happening with this newly described "shocking leap" behavior.

First, he determined that the eels ignore most things that do not conduct electricity, which makes sense because living things typically conduct electricity.

By hooking a voltmeter and then an ammeter to an aluminum plate, Catania was able to measure the nature and strength of the electric impulses the eels were producing as they leap up the conductor. He found that both the voltage and the amperage produced by the eels increased dramatically as the eel leaped higher on the target.

When the eel is fully submerged, the power of its electrical pulses is distributed throughout the water. When the eel's body extends out of the water, however, the path that the electrical current travels goes from its chin directly into the target. Then the electric current travels through the target until it can exit back into the water where it travels back to the eel's tail, completing the circuit.

"This allow the eels to deliver shocks with a maximum amount of power to partially submerged land animals that invade their territory," Catania said. "It also allows them to electrify a much larger portion of the invader's body."

To visually illustrate this effect, the researcher painstakingly covered a plastic arm and a plastic alligator head with a conductive metal strip and a network of LEDs. When an eel attacks these targets, the electrical pulses it generates cause the LEDs to light up brightly.

"When you see the LEDs light up, think of them as the endings of pain nerves being stimulated. That will give you an idea of how effective these attacks can be," Catania said.

(In the von Humboldt story, two horses were stunned and drowned in the first five minutes of the skirmish with the eels.)

Catania found that his eels most often attacked when the water in the aquarium was lowered, probably because they felt cornered. Much of the Amazon basin, where the electric eels live, is under water during the rainy season but, during the dry season, the water recedes leaving many ponds and oxbows which could restrict the eels' freedom of movement and make them vulnerable to attacks by land predators.

Despite their power, the pulses that the eels produce while fully submerged might not be sufficient to discourage a hungry terrestrial predator if the predator can keep most of its body out of the water. "If you put your fingers in the water when the eel generates a pulse, you can barely feel it. If you put your whole hand in the water, you feel it a bit more strongly," Catania said.

In addition, in some locales electric eels are known to breed during the dry season and might benefit from having an effective way to protect their young.

The eels' leaping behavior likely evolved in steps, Catania suggested. Simply getting close to the target would increase the effectiveness of its electroshocks. Making direct contact with the intruder would further increase the power of the impulses, as would making contact above the water. Once its head is above the water, then the further up the eel goes, the more power is directed to the threat.

"Each stage provides a successive advantage, suggesting how it may have evolved," he has concluded.

As far as von Humboldt goes, "it seems reasonable to suggest that [he] observed a similar eel behavior on March 19th of 1800," Catania said.

Story Source:

The above post is reprinted from materials provided by **Vanderbilt University**. The original item was written by David Salisbury. *Note: Materials may be edited for content and length.*

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In Korea People Believe Electric Fans Cause Death

Many South Koreans Believe That Household Electric Fans Cause Death By Asphyxiation and Hypothermia

You may have heard of people losing fingers by sticking their hands into spinning fan blades, but have you ever heard of an electric fan sucking all the air out of a room and killing you through asphyxiation?

Of course not, unless you were brought up in South Korea.

You see, in the 1970's to conserve electricity use, the South Korean government spread a rumor that electric fans could cause death by hypothermia or asphyxiation.

Well that would certainly cut down on your fan use!

As illogical and unscientific as this situation sounds, many people in South Korea believe it to be true.

Below is an excerpt from May 24 *New York Times* about the situation:

But across South Korea, many people believe the whirring blades can cause death — and to address those fears, manufacturers equip fans with sleep timers.

How, exactly, might the electric breeze kill? Theories abound in South Korea, among them that the cold air circulating in a sealed room could cause hypothermia, leading to organ failure. Or maybe they suck out the oxygen, causing suffocation. Some fear that the fan itself converts oxygen molecules into carbon dioxide.

For the record, none of these theories are true. But that has not stopped the Korean news media from reporting on supposed fan deaths. Even the government has endorsed the lethal-breeze idea. In 2006, the state-funded Korean Consumer Protection Board listed “asphyxiation from electric fans and air-conditioners” as one of the top five recurring summer accidents.

The agency warned:

If bodies are exposed to electric fans or air-conditioners for too long, it causes bodies to lose water and hypothermia. If directly in contact with a fan, this could lead to death from increase of carbon dioxide saturation concentration and decrease of oxygen concentration. The risks are higher for the elderly and patients with respiratory problems.

According to the advisory, there were 20 cases of fan asphyxiation between 2003 and 2005. “To prevent asphyxiation,” it said, “timers should be set, wind direction should be rotated and doors should be left open.”

Not all South Koreans buy into the electric fan myth, but it just goes to show how far people will believe in irrational things if propagated by their government.

Not like *our* government would ever lie to us.

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Elizabeth I's war with England's Catholics

Friday 22nd May 2015

historyextra.com



England's Elizabethan Catholics were public enemy number one. Their Masses were banned and their priests were executed. Jessie Childs reveals what life was like for 'recusants' and

'church papists' in a hostile Protestant state.

This article was first published in the May 2014 issue of BBC History Magazine



Jesuit priest Edmund Campion on the rack. He was hanged, drawn and quartered at Tyburn in 1581. (Bridgeman Art Library)

In 1828, builders removing a lintel over a doorway at Rushton Hall in Northamptonshire were surprised to see an old, beautifully bound book come down with the rubble. They decided to investigate and knocked through a thick partition wall, exposing a recess, about 5 feet long and 15 inches wide. Inside, wrapped up in a large sheet, was an enormous bundle of papers and books that had once belonged to Sir Thomas Tresham, a Catholic gentleman in the reign of Elizabeth I.

There have been other discoveries in other counties: a secret room chanced upon by a boy exploring a derelict wing of Harvington Hall, near Kidderminster, in 1894; a small wax disc bearing the imprint of a cross and a lamb (an *Agnus Dei*), found in a box nailed to a joist by an electrician working in the attic of Lyford Grange, Berkshire, in 1959; and a 'pedlar's chest' containing vestments, a chalice and a portable altar, bricked in at Samlesbury Hall, Lancashire. Each bears testimony to the resourcefulness and courage with which Catholic men and women tried to keep their faith in Protestant England.

Under Elizabeth I, Catholics grew adept at concealment. Their lifeblood – the Mass – was banned. Anyone who heard it risked a fine and prison. Hence the need for secret Mass-kits and altar-stones small enough to slip into the pocket. Their priests – essential agents of sacramental grace – were outlawed.

Reconciling anyone to Rome (and, indeed, being reconciled) was made treason. After 1585, any priest ordained abroad since 1559, and found on English soil, was automatically deemed a traitor and his lay host a felon, both punishable by death. Hence the need for priest-holes, like the one at Harvington Hall, or at Hindlip, where a feeding tube was embedded in the masonry.

Even personal devotional items like rosary beads or the *Agnus Dei* found at Lyford were

regarded with suspicion, since a statute of 1571 had ruled that the receipt of such 'superstitious' items, blessed by the pope or his priests, would lead to forfeiture of lands and goods.

It is impossible to know how many Catholics there were in Elizabethan England, for few were willing to be categorised and counted. John Bossy (defining a Catholic as one who habitually, though not necessarily regularly, used the services of a priest) estimated some 40,000 in 1603, less than one per cent of the population.

This was not a homogenous group, rather a wide and wavering spectrum of experience. Many were branded 'church papists': they attended official services according to law, but some conformed only occasionally or partially. William Flamstead read his book during the sermon "in contempt of the word preached", while for two decades of attendance Sir Richard Shireburn blocked his ears with wool.

Parishioners might refuse Protestant communion or they might hide the bread up their sleeve to dispose of later. Mrs Kath Lacy from the East Riding of Yorkshire trod it "under her foot". Other wives avoided church altogether and, since their husbands owned the property, they often escaped prosecution. "Such here have a common saying," grouched one Northamptonshire official in 1599, "the unbelieving husband shall be saved by the believing wife."



English Catholic women are arrested for attending an illegal Mass, from Martyrology of Campion, the 1582 engraving by Richard

Verstegan. (Bridgeman Art Library)

At the disobedient end of the spectrum were those individuals (8,590 recorded in 1603) who staunchly adhered to the Roman church's insistence that compliance was an insult to the faith. They were known as recusants (from the Latin *recusare*: to refuse) and they paid a high price for their 'obstinacy'. In 1559 the fine for missing church was 12 pence. In 1581 it was raised to a crippling 20 pounds.

In 1587 enforcement became much stricter with the introduction of cumulative monthly fines and the forfeiture of two-thirds of a defaulting recusant's estate. Lord Vaux of Harrowden was reduced to pawning his parliamentary robes; poorer folk did not have that luxury.

What recusants publicly requested – freedom of worship and the right to abstain from official church services – may not sound unreasonable, but this was the age of Inquisition, of conquistadors, religious wars and, in the case of Elizabeth's half-sister Mary I, human bonfires. Elizabeth was a divine-right queen with a sworn duty to maintain the one true faith but, unlike Mary, she had conformed during her predecessor's reign. She did not like "to make windows into men's hearts and secret thoughts" noted the oft-misquoted Francis Bacon, but she expected outward obedience, in church and state.

Illegitimate pretender

On 25 February 1570, Pope Pius V issued a bull of excommunication against Elizabeth I. In late support of the 1569 northern rebellion (led by the Catholic earls of Northumberland and Westmorland and crushed with ruthless efficiency – 450 executions under martial law is the conservative estimate), the bull declared Elizabeth an illegitimate pretender and bound her subjects to disobey her, upon pain of anathema (a formal curse by the pope).

A later resolution from Pius's successor, Gregory XIII, allowing for provisional obedience "under present circumstances", did not alter the fundamental message. It was impossible, wrote the Privy Council clerk, Robert Beale, "that they should love her, whose religion founded in the pope's authority maketh her birth and title unlawful".

There was, indeed, some rancour towards the queen. In 1591, the recusant gentleman Swithin Wells retorted to a jibe about papists having been begotten by bulls with the words: "If we have bulls to our fathers, thou hast a cow to thy mother." He swiftly apologised and the circumstances were exceptional: Wells was just about to swing for the crime of priest-harbours. But even a self-fashioned loyalist like Sir Thomas Tresham privately entertained hostile views on the 'bastardised' Elizabeth.

Conflicted loyalties caused considerable anguish, as evinced by the desperately sad letter that the 24-year-old convert Robert Markham wrote to his parents in 1594. "Every hour presents a hell unto me... In the night, I cannot sleep or take any rest, so monstrous is the horror of my conscience." He pledged never to fight against Elizabeth, nor to have any truck with conspiracy. "I am," he declared, "and will be as good a subject to her Majesty as any in England." But there had to be a caveat: "My conscience only reserve I to myself, whereupon dependeth my salvation."

Markham chose exile, like many others, some of whom became radicalised by the experience. The Catholics who stayed at home used various methods to sustain their faith, from spiritual reading, prayer and meditation to the preservation of rosaries and relics. They were advised to internalise their devotions. For instance, certain spots in the garden could be linked to different saints, so that walks would become, "as it were, short pilgrimages". But there was no substitute for the sacraments and, although some erstwhile Marian priests continued to minister in secret, it was only when William Allen's seminary boys started coming off the boats in 1574 that Catholic hopes – and government fears – were revived.

The first English missionaries came from Douai in Flanders, where William Allen, the former principal of St Mary Hall, Oxford, had founded a college in 1568. In June 1580, they were

joined in England by the Jesuits, members of a dynamic religious order founded in the furnace of the Reformation.

"We travelled only for souls," insisted Edmund Campion at his execution at Tyburn on 1 December 1581, "we touched neither state nor policy." These were indeed the instructions that this Jesuit and his co-missioner, Robert Persons, had carried from Rome. But they were also armed with faculties to print books anonymously, they insisted upon absolute recusancy and they challenged the state to a public debate. Campion's 'brag' chilled his adversaries:

"Touching our Society, be it known unto you that we have made a league – all the Jesuits in the world, whose succession and multitude must overreach all the practices of England – cheerfully to carry the cross that you shall lay upon us and never to despair your recovery while we have a man left to enjoy your Tyburn, or to be racked with your torments, or to be consumed with your prisons. The expense is reckoned, the enterprise is begun; it is of God, it cannot be withstood. So the faith was planted, so it must be restored."

Campion was one of about 130 priests executed for religious treason in Elizabeth's reign. A further 60 of their lay supporters were also put to death. Torture was used more than in any other English reign. Margaret Ward, destined for the gallows for organising the escape of a priest, protested that "the queen herself, if she had the bowels of a woman, would have done as much if she had known the ill-treatment he underwent". But it was the heart and stomach of a king that were required for England's defence.



Elizabeth I by Bettes. (Bridgeman Art Library)

Assassination attempts

With no named successor, and a Catholic heir presumptive – Mary, Queen of Scots – waiting, wings clipped but ready to soar, Elizabeth I was vulnerable to conspiracy. The security of the realm depended entirely on her personal survival in an age that saw brother rulers taken by bullet and blade.

The assassination in 1584 of William of Orange, the Dutch Protestant figurehead shot in the chest by a Catholic fanatic chasing the bounty of Philip II of Spain, was particularly alarming. The following year, parliament passed a statute

licensing the revenge killing of assassins, or witting beneficiaries of assassins, in the event of a successful attempt on the queen's life.

The threat from Spain, the papacy, the French house of Guise and the agents of Mary, Queen of Scots was very real and seemingly unceasing. From the sanctuary of exile, William Allen agitated for an invasion of England and frequently exaggerated the extent of home support. Only fear made Catholics obey the queen, he assured the pope in 1585, "which fear will be removed when they see the force from without". The priests, he added, would direct the consciences and actions of Catholics "when the time comes".

In reality, there were very few Elizabethans willing to perpetrate what would now be called an act of terror. But there was a vast grey area that encompassed all kinds of suspicious activity – communication with the queen's enemies, the handling of tracts critical of the regime, the non-disclosure of sensitive information, the sheltering and funding of priests who turned out to be subversive. Even the quiescent majority was feared for what it might do if there was ever a confrontation between Elizabeth I and the pope.

Catholic attempts on the queen's life

Elizabeth's advisors foiled a series of assassination plots

Spain plans an invasion, 1571

Named after the Florentine merchant who acted as the go-between for the Duke of Norfolk, Mary Stuart, Philip II and the pope, the Ridolfi plot was a plan for a Spanish invasion of England and the substitution of Elizabeth with Mary. Roberto Ridolfi was known to the English government and met with Elizabeth before heading for Rome. The plot was foiled upon the arrest of a courier at Dover. Norfolk was executed, Mary survived and Ridolfi later emerged as a papal senator. He clearly relished intrigue.

Throckmorton's sorry end, 1583

Francis Throckmorton was the linkman for a plot that might be seen as part of a continuum of intrigues sponsored by the powers of Catholic Europe in the 1580s. The aim, as with the Ridolfi plot, was the overthrow of Elizabeth and the restoration of Catholicism in England. Mary Stuart's kinsman, the Duke of Guise, was set to invade at Arundel, but the plan was aborted upon Throckmorton's arrest in November 1583. Throckmorton was "somewhat pinched" (ie tortured) and executed the following July.

The lone extremist blows his cover, 1583

Not every attempt on Elizabeth's life strained the sinews of Europe's whisperers and watchers. John Somerville, a distant kinsman (by marriage) of William Shakespeare, seems only to have had a "frantic humour" and a pistol in his pocket when he set off from his home in Warwickshire to kill the queen. He failed because he broadcast his intentions en route, but, as events elsewhere proved (see page 54), it only took one extremist, bent on martyrdom and blind to worldly consequence, to effect an assassination.

Walsingham ensnares Mary Stuart, 1586

The plot that brought down Mary Stuart was, from the outset, a conspiracy to assassinate Elizabeth. Anthony Babington was not its chief architect, though it was his letter of 6 July 1586 that floated to Mary the plan for "the dispatch of the usurper". The plot was uncovered – and arguably fomented – using an agent provocateur, intercepts (via the bung-hole of a beer keg) and forgery. Whatever the ethics of the sting, the plot was real. Priests were involved and Mary, executed on 8 February 1587, was complicit.

Jesuits prepare to strike – or do they? 1594

Elizabeth's last decade saw court rivalry seep into intelligence work and the result was an occasional – and occasionally deliberate – blurring of perception and reality. Immediately after the Earl of Essex's exposure of a dubious poison plot, the queen's adviser William Cecil went one up with a Jesuit conspiracy involving several Irish soldiers, whose confessions seemed remarkably fortuitous, if somewhat muddled. Two of the assassins-designate were known to Cecil. One he had not deemed a significant threat; the other was an informant and possible plant.

When asked the “bloody questions”, framed to extract ultimate allegiances, Catholics proved as adept as their queen at the “answer answerless”. Spies and agent provocateurs were thrown into the field, moles were placed in embassies and recusant houses were searched for priests and “popish trash”. The queen's agents were sometimes overzealous, sometimes downright immoral, in their pursuit of national security. “There is less danger in fearing too much than too little,” advised the queen's spymaster, Francis Walsingham.

In 1588, when the Spanish Armada beat menacingly towards the English Channel, the “most obstinate and noted” recusants were rounded up and imprisoned. Sir Thomas Tresham begged for a chance to prove his “true English heart” and fight for his queen. He vigorously disputed the claim that “while we lived, her Majesty should not be in security, nor the realm freed from invasion”.

Nevertheless, the Spaniards sailing aboard the Rosario were told to expect support from at least a third of England's population. Elizabeth's Privy Council was “certain” that an invasion would “never” have been attempted, “but upon hope” of internal assistance. It may have been a false hope, built on a house of cards by émigrés desperate to see the old faith restored at home, but for as long as it was held, and acted upon, by backers powerful enough to do damage, Tresham and the rest, whether “faithfullest true English subjects” or not, were indeed a security risk.

England's victory in 1588 was celebrated as the triumph of Christ over Antichrist, the true church over the false, freedom over tyranny. Elizabeth I was hailed as Gloriana, the Virgin Queen who “brought up, even under her wing, a nation that was almost begotten and born under her, that never shouted any other Ave than for her name”.

There was no place for rosaries in this predestined, Protestant version of English history. Even Philip II, usually so sure of his status as the special one, was momentarily confounded by the mysteries of God's will. He soon rallied, however, and there were more failed armadas. At every whisper of invasion, the screw was turned on those ‘bad members’ known to be recusants. In 1593, the ‘statute of confinement’ ruled that recusants could not travel beyond five miles of their home without a licence.

This copper engraving from 1583 shows the execution of two Catholic priests (through hanging and disembowelment) in Ireland. (AKG Images/Permission of the Folger Shakespeare Library)



Observance could be patchy and enforcement slack. Anti-Catholicism was nearly always more passionate in the abstract than it was on the ground, but it still must have been alienating and psychologically draining to be spied on, searched, and branded an 'unnatural subject' at every critical juncture. Tresham likened it to being "drenched in a sea of shameless slanders".

Tresham outlived Queen Elizabeth by two years. His hope for a measure of toleration under James VI and I did not materialise and, having paid a total of £7,717 in recusancy penalties, he died on 11 September 1605 a disappointed man. The following month, his wife's nephew, 'Robin' Catesby, tried to recruit his son, Francis, into the Gunpowder Plot. Francis Tresham was arrested on 12 November and died before he could face trial. On, or soon after 28 November 1605, the family papers were bundled up in a sheet and immured at Rushton Hall. They lay there, undisturbed, for over two centuries, until, in 1828, the builders came in.

Jessie Childs is the author of *God's Traitors: Terror and Faith in Elizabethan England* (The Bodley Head, 2014). The book, which won this year's PEN Hessel-Tiltman Prize for History, is out now in paperback. To find out more, [click here](#).

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English magic: how folklore haunts the British landscape

By Frank Cottrell Boyce

newstatesman.com

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The Changeling (1905) by Arthur Rackham

One harvest time during the chaotic reign of King Stephen, a farmworker in Woolpit, Suffolk, found a pair of children hiding in a pit. They were frightened. They couldn't speak English and their skin was bright green. At first they wouldn't eat anything but raw beans. The boy died. But the girl grew up, got married and learned English. She said they had come from a place called St Martin's Land, where the sun never shone. They had heard a beautiful sound and followed it into

a cave. When they came out of the cave they were in Suffolk. She knew now that the sound was the ringing of church bells. In his *Anatomy of Melancholy*, Robert Burton suggested that the children "fell from the Heavens", so in *The Man in the Moone* (1638) – the first science-fiction book written in English – Francis Godwin made the rejected children of the moon-dwellers green. The pulp sci-fi idea of Little Green Men from outer space starts in a Suffolk autumn in the Middle Ages.

Caroline Larrington's joyous celebration of English folklore delights in the way these stories bounce around the culture, never quite going away. She traces the history of changelings from the smoke of the fireside to Irvine Welsh's *Acid House*. I was particularly pleased to see Lowestoft's finest, the Darkness, get a mention for their take on the terrifying Black Dog of Blythburgh. There's a direct line from the Scottish brownie to Harry Potter's Dobby.

Some fictional characters – Dracula, say, or Peter Pan – are so vivid that they detach themselves from their origin and become part of our common heritage. But a folk tale is something different. It demands that we believe it has some truth in it. We go to see the claw marks of the Black Dog on the church at Blythburgh. We listen for the church bells of the drowned village. We want there to be a monster in the loch. We yearn to know that there really was a king called Arthur, even if he wasn't all gussied up in armour and sitting at a round table.

Alan Garner – who deservedly gets a section of the book to himself – famously retold the legend of Arthur sleeping beneath the escarpment of Alderley Edge in Cheshire in *The*

Weirdstone of Brisingamen. Garner has since then performed a kind of verbal archaeology on the story, which he originally got from his grandfather. He has scraped away the Arthurian additions and worked his way back to an ancient fertility ritual. He found a moment of ancient magic that continues to reverberate faintly in the place names, pub signs and information centres of suburban Greater Manchester. In an age of constant movement, there is something appealing about these place-specific stories. Larrington's book really does describe a journey through the landscape (it has been adapted for radio, and would make a terrific TV series).

Sometimes the reality is emotional rather than historical. Larrington gives a wonderful account of changeling stories and speculates that these tales of disruptive impostor infants – who are flung into fires or streams or down wells in the hope that the fairies will return the stolen human child – give us a heartbreaking insight into ideas about disability or emotional disturbance.

This summer I walked the length of Hadrian's Wall. At every landmark, you could watch people go through a series of actions as rigid as ritual. Park up. Climb up. Look into the distance, try to imagine what it was like before the A69. Go to the tea room. Conjecturing about Roman ruins is almost as old as the ruins themselves. Anglo-Saxon poetry is full of awestruck speculation about who could have built these great structures. The chief joy of Larrington's book is that it takes those centuries of wondering as seriously as the original wonder.

Her account is both scholarly and sprightly but it has a poignant undertow. She is "an army brat" who comes from "nowhere", and yet nearly all of these stories are tightly tied to a particular place. They are stories that explain place names and geographical oddities. They connect our brief human lives to a geological timescale. The local people are their custodians.

These become special places, but Larrington is alert to the idea of what makes them special – the misunderstandings, the superstitions, the rituals that grow up. If you walk up Alderley Edge you will find traces of many signs of ancient activity: old copper workings, knapped flints. But you will also find a miniature stone circle. Sometimes you'll find people standing in the middle of it, feeling its ancient power, hoping for some kind of druidical connection. All this even though the local information leaflet informs you that the stones were plonked here by Alan Garner's grandfather, a stonemason who thought it a decorative way to get rid of some stock after he over-ordered.

The titular Green Man falls into this category. There are lavish coffee-table books outlining the history of this ancient vegetation god – half man, half shrub – who gives us a glimpse of what our native religion was like, before the coming of Christianity, when we all lived in the greenwood and were supposedly at one with nature. Except, of course, he is no such thing. The Green Man dates back to 1939, when he appeared in a learned article by Lady Raglan of Llandenny, in Monmouthshire, who concocted him by conflating certain folk traditions with the foliate heads found in medieval churches. I usually find people who fall for this kind of "spiritual but not religious" stuff intensely annoying, but Larrington shows more tolerance as

she observes the way we invented this newly ancient idea and used it to help us realign our relationship with the environment and our past.

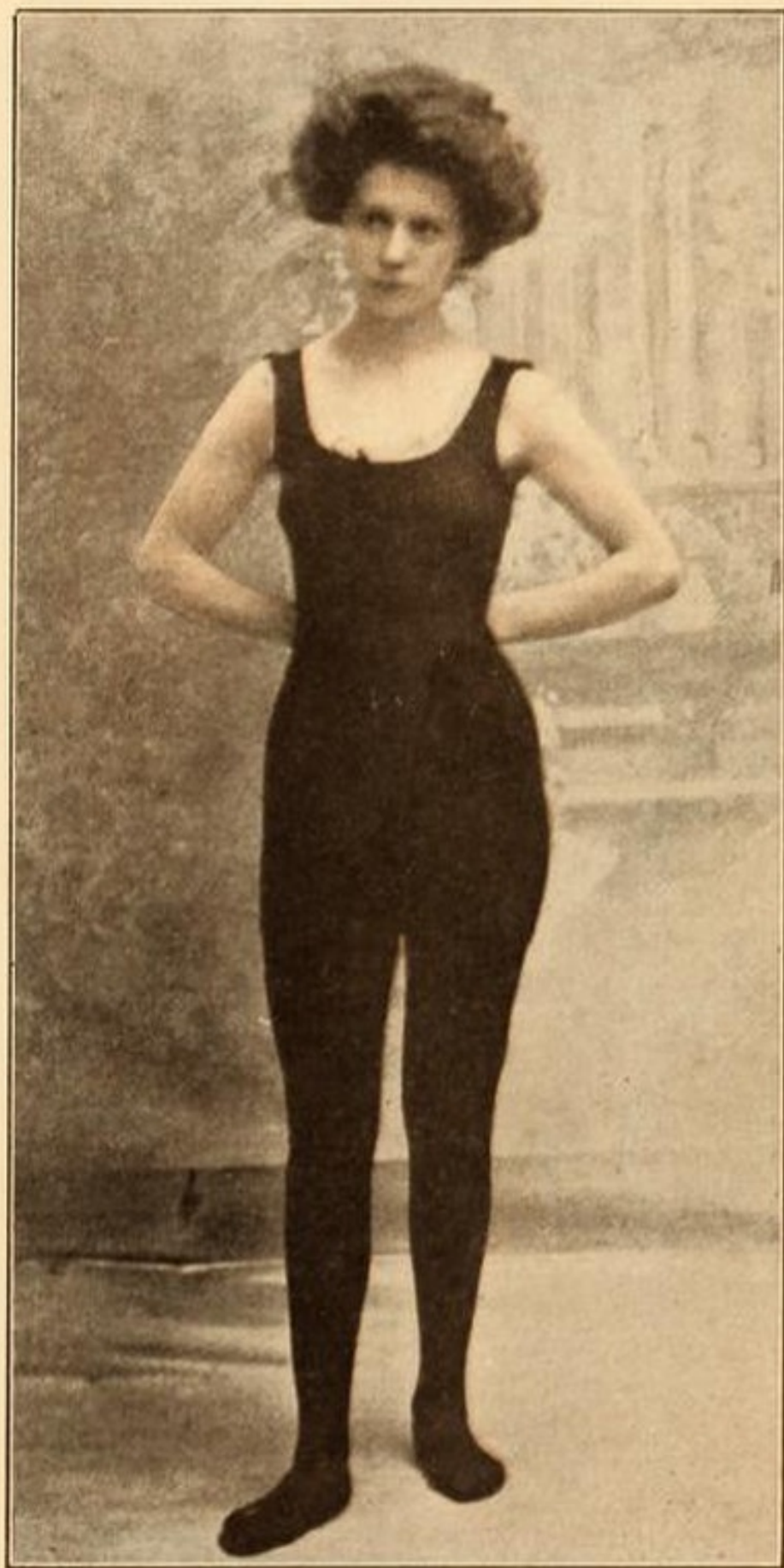
According to the old story, the man who sleeps under Alderley Edge is an ancient chieftain – a remnant of our beginnings – who will return at the end of time. Not far away is the beautiful inverted dome of the Lovell Telescope, pointing out into the universe, searching for echoes of the Big Bang and evidence of the forthcoming Big Crunch. Living in an infinite universe, we search for beginnings and ends. *The Land of the Green Man* is a celebration of the long-living tales of a short-lived folk.

The Land of the Green Man: A Journey through the Supernatural Landscapes of the British Isles

is out now from I B Tauris (£20)

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Entire body too thin. Legs, arms, and chest need filling out with additional muscular as well as fatty tissue. A fair sample of the physical condition of the average inactive young girl.

Ex-Astronaut Charged With Murder in Deaths of 2 Girls

nbcnews.com

Jun 8 2016, 5:36 am ET

by The Associated Press

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. — Astronaut James Halsell Jr. seemed the very definition of someone with the right stuff. An Air Force Academy graduate and decorated test pilot, he commanded or piloted five space shuttle missions. NASA even turned to him for leadership as it was picking up the pieces after the Columbia disaster in 2003.



Image: James Halsell Jr. in 2003

Astronaut James Halsell Jr. on February 7, 2003. RICK FOWLER / Reuters, file

Now, a decade after his retirement from the space agency, the 59-year-old has been charged with murder after an early-morning car crash Monday killed two young sisters on a highway in Alabama.

State police said alcohol and speed may have been factors in the incident. The Tuscaloosa News reported that court documents showed troopers said they found an empty package of sleeping pills and an empty wine bottle in a motel room where Halsell had stayed before the crash.

Troopers said a vehicle driven by Halsell collided about 2:50 a.m. with a Ford Fiesta in which 11-year-old Niomi Deona James and 13-year-old Jayla Latrick Parler were riding. The girls were thrown from the car and died. Neither was wearing a seat belt.

Halsell, who lives in Huntsville, was arrested and released from jail on \$150,000 bail. Court records weren't available Tuesday to show whether the retired Air Force colonel has a lawyer. A call to his home was not immediately returned.

The girls' father, Pernell James, 37, had driven to Texas to pick them up at their mother's home in Houston for a summer-long visit to Alabama, said Dennis Stripling, mayor of the town of Brent.

STS-101 Commander James Halsell (left) and STS-98 Commander Ken Cockrell (right) pause for a photo in Atlantis' cockpit at the Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral, Florida, in April 1999. NASA/Handout / via Reuters

"It's very tragic, a sad thing that has happened," Stripling said. "They were like 20 minutes from home when this accident happened."

The father was expected to be released from a hospital Tuesday. A woman in his car, Shontel Latriva Cutts, 25, was listed in fair condition.



Image: James Halsell and Ken Cockrell in April 1999

The crash happened in a remote, wooded area on the edge of Tuscaloosa County with no highway lampposts. A set of swerving skid marks could be seen, along with a patch of blackened pavement and grass on the tree-lined shoulder of the highway.

Halsell graduated from the U.S. Air Force Academy in 1978 and later finished first in his class at test-pilot school. He wanted to go to space so much he applied for every NASA

astronaut class from 1978 to 1990, when he was accepted.

An online biography by NASA said Halsell went to work in the aerospace industry in 2006 after a career that included five shuttle flights starting in 1994. He spent more than 1,250 hours in space, serving as commander on three shuttle missions and pilot on two others.

He also led NASA's return-to-flight planning team after space shuttle Columbia disintegrated during re-entry in 2003.

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How the FAA Shot Down "Uber for Planes"

And How It's Fighting Back

- Jared Meyer

Thursday, June 02, 2016

Imagine traveling from Boston to Martha's Vineyard in under an hour and for less than \$70. Believe it or not, this option was available from Flytenow's website or app, by looking for a general aviation pilot who was making that trip, and then splitting the cost with that pilot and whoever else was sharing the flight.

Entrepreneurs were bringing private air travel to the masses until Flytenow's leadership met with members of the Federal Aviation Administration to ensure that they were complying with all laws and regulations.

Instead of embracing this service, the FAA used tortuous logic to ban Flytenow and other online flight-sharing websites because it considered these to be "common carriers" (such as Delta Airlines). Private pilots cannot possibly comply with the myriad regulations that apply to the large airlines.

In what follows, Flytenow founders Alan Guichard and Matt Voska explain why the federal government should make the FAA allow flight sharing to get off the ground.

Jared Meyer: Flight sharing is nothing new, as people have always tried to find ways to fill empty seats on private planes. The problem was finding someone who wanted to go where you wanted, at the time you needed. And, from what I understand, it is still completely legal to find people to share flights (and their costs) by using old-fashioned tools such as bulletin boards or telephone calls. Why does the FAA not allow people to use peer-to-peer online interaction to make the process much more efficient and inclusive?

Alan Guichard: You're exactly right. Pilots have always been allowed to share flights as long as the pilot and the passenger share a common purpose, which they clearly have on an online bulletin board such as Flytenow. The FAA's concern is that online interaction will lead to sharing beyond what they refer to as "friends and acquaintances."

For example, the FAA explained that advertising a shared flight on Facebook would be

permissible if a person only had a few friends, but that the same flight would transform the pilot into Delta or American Airlines if he or she had "thousands" of friends. The FAA's new requirement has the effect of restraining speech because there's no way for a pilot to know what communication is lawful versus what isn't.

JM: Usually the introduction of profits is what makes regulators go crazy. But what is especially troubling about the FAA's ban on your business model is that, under existing law, pilots cannot profit from sharing their flights. They are only able to recoup the proportional cost of their trips. Can you continue explaining why the FAA harbors such a deep-seated hatred for flight sharing?

Matt Voska: Understandably, they don't want an "Uber of the Skies" to exist. But this is not what Flytenow is about—we're akin to carpooling for aviation. I think it's more of a knee-jerk reaction to new technology, rather than a deep-seated hatred.

Now, more than ever, innovation and regulation intersect due to more efficient communication methods, and regulators are almost always too slow to adapt. This has been true since the advent of the automobile, when regulators passed laws banning "the running of horseless carriages." Unfortunately, the FAA has taken such a hardline approach when the exact same flight-sharing activity is now completely legal in the European Union. We joke that Europe has "out-freedomed" us, which is rare when it comes to Internet technology.

JM: Often pointless, anti-competitive regulations are pushed by special interest groups that stand to benefit from maintaining the status quo. Other times regulators myopically focus on regulating just for the sake of regulating, regardless of the negative effects that their new commandments have on consumers. What unites both of these approaches is the ever-present appeal to public safety. First, are there special interests behind the FAA's ruling? And second, why do appeals to public safety fail to hold water in this case?

AG: We feel that special interests are at the heart of it. The FAA is being pressured by lobbyists in the private charter and airline arena to ban flight sharing. Why? Because flight sharing gives people options—sharing a flight from Boston to Martha's Vineyard costs less than \$70, whereas a charter would cost at least \$1,000. These established business models see flight sharing as a threat.

The FAA's appeal to public safety fails because banning the Internet as a means of communication is not rationally related to safety. According to the FAA, it is perfectly okay for strangers who meet over a physical bulletin to share a flight, but if those same people meet online, where flight-sharing services such as Flytenow offer verified identities, then the flight magically transforms into an illegal commercial operation. Another one of my favorite examples is that not even Neil Armstrong or Captain Sully could share expenses with Flytenow because the FAA's restrictions have nothing to do with pilot qualifications.

JM: What is the best hope for convincing (or forcing) the FAA to modernize its approach to flight sharing? You would think patriotic pride alone would be enough given that Europe is far ahead of the United States with its growing market for flight sharing.

MV: We're working on multiple approaches right now. We are in the process of filing a Petition for Certiorari to appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court in June.

Additionally, we've received support in Congress on the issue. Rep. Mark Sanford (R-SC) proposed an amendment to the FAA reauthorization bill that explicitly allows pilots to communicate and share their flights using the Internet. It has passed through committee and is now awaiting a floor vote.

We've had more pushback in the Senate where charter lobbyists came out in opposition to putting the same language in the Senate version of the bill. Instead, Senator Cory Booker (D-NJ) opted for a study on the topic to review making changes later. In Washington, a "study" means the legislation will likely never see the light of day. Ironically, the Senate recommended having the FAA itself conduct the study.

We're urging people to make their views on this issue heard. It's more than just a pilot's right to communicate—the FAA's position sets a very dangerous precedent for other executive actions to prohibit what should be completely legal online activity.

JM: This is a clear-cut case of an executive agency misusing its powers to stand in the way of innovation. The technology that enables more efficient flight sharing unquestionably helps consumers and pilots, and there is absolutely no reason for the FAA to stubbornly keep flight sharing grounded.

This piece first appeared at Forbes.

Ilya Somin is Professor of Law at George Mason University School of Law. He blogs at the Volokh Conspiracy.

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FAA Warns of GPS Outages This Month During Mysterious Tests on the West Coast

Matt Novak

gizmodo.com

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An aerial view of the Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake (Wikipedia)

Starting today, it appears the US military will be testing a device or devices that will potentially jam GPS signals for six hours each day. We say “appears” because officially the tests were announced by the FAA but are centered near the US Navy’s largest installation in

the Mojave Desert. And the Navy won’t tell us much about what’s going on.

The FAA issued an advisory warning pilots on Saturday that global positioning systems (GPS) could be unreliable during six different days this month, primarily in the Southwestern United States. On June 7, 9, 21, 23, 28, and 30th the GPS interference testing will be taking place between 9:30am and 3:30pm Pacific time. But if you’re on the ground, you probably won’t notice interference.

The testing will be centered on China Lake, California—home to the Navy’s 1.1 million acre Naval Air Weapons Center in the Mojave Desert. The potentially lost signals will stretch hundreds of miles in each direction and will affect various types of GPS, reaching the furthest at higher altitudes. But the jamming will only affect aircraft above 50 feet. As you can see from the FAA map below, the jamming will almost reach the California-Oregon border at 40,000 feet above sea level and 505 nautical miles at its greatest range.

Map released by the FAA showing the GPS jamming that will occur at different altitudes this month (FAA)

I gave the Naval Air Warfare Center Weapons Division a call yesterday, but they couldn’t tell me much.

“We’re aware of the flight advisory,” Deidre Patin, Public Affairs specialist for Naval Air Warfare Center Weapons Division told me over the phone. But she couldn’t give me any details about whether there was indeed GPS “jamming,” nor whether it had happened before. Patin added, “I can’t go into the details of the testing, it’s general testing for our ranges.”

As AVWeb points out, Embraer Phenom 300 business jets are being told to avoid the area completely during the tests. The FAA claims that the jamming test could interfere with the

business jet's "aircraft flight stability controls."

GPS technology has become so ubiquitous that cheap jamming technology has become a real concern for both military and civilian aircraft. And if we had to speculate we'd say that these tests are probably pulling double duty for both offensive and defensive military capabilities. But honestly, that's just a guess.



The US Military Used Lasers to Shoot Down a Drone in 1973

Lasers are the future of warfare. So it might come as a surprise to many Americans that the US... Read more paleofuture.gizmodo.com

These tests are naturally going to fuel plenty of conspiracy theories about

mind control, weather modification, and aliens—especially with China Lake's proximity to both large population centers like LA and Las Vegas, and the fact that Area 51 is practically just down the road. But it doesn't take a conspiracy theorist to tell us we're fucked if terrorists or shitty teenagers make it a habit of jamming GPS signals for everybody.

If you experience any significant GPS interference this month or know the "real" reason behind these test (aliens, right?) please let us know in the comments.

Correction 11:24am: This post originally misstated that one level of interference would occur at 4,000 feet. It's 40,000 feet above sea level, and has been corrected. I regret the error.

Reply

• Bryan HerbertMatt Novak
6/07/16 2:59pm

I live in Las Vegas, for over a month now Ive been hearing on my scanner airline pilots complaining about GPS outages. Whatever this test is, it started here in the Nevada desert.

• Matt NovakBryan Herbert
6/07/16 3:05pm

aliens.

• Bryan HerbertMatt Novak
6/07/16 6:44pm

GPS jamming/spoofing has been a problem overseas. Unmanned Aerial Systems, guided bombs, and JDAM missiles use GPS to aid in navigating and striking targets. Considering these tests are now taking place at China Lake NAWS, home to one of the largest Electronic Combat Ranges in the world (R-2524), my guess is the military is working on next generation technology that will help keep so-called drones from being hijacked and also prevent ordnance from striking civilian homes and hospitals that sit a dozen or so feet from their intended targets.

<http://www.dtic.mil/ndia/2011targe...>

<http://www.defensenews.com/story/defense/...>

• **technologi** Matt Novak
6/07/16 11:16am

The tests are focused around 'drones', not commercial/civilian aircraft although all are affected.

◦ **Matt Novak** **technologi**
6/07/16 11:19am

Link?

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Faces of Survival, Eyes of Despair - Titanic

stuffnobodycaresabout.com

Survival and Despair In One Photograph



*Marjorie Collyer Titanic survivor
age 8 photo loc*

This is Marjorie Lottie Collyer, age 8, of Bishopstoke, Hampshire, England.



Charlotte Collyer Titanic survivor photo loc

From the same photograph, this is Marjorie's mother, Charlotte Collyer, age 30 also of Bishopstoke, Hampshire, England.

Both survived the sinking of the Titanic.

The utter despair in Charlotte Collyer's eyes are apparent as she looks away from the photographer. Daughter Marjorie with her youthful eyes, stares hauntingly straight into the lens of the camera. The unknown future had to weigh heavily on these two survivors minds.

There is something strikingly modern in Marjorie's face and expression. She looks so similar to so many children you see today.

Here is the entire photograph of Charlotte and Marjorie Collyer sitting together in June 1912.



*Charlotte and Marjorie Collyer Titanic
survivors photo loc*

A Titanic White Star line blanket drapes Charlotte's lap as the two sit on a porch swing in Payette Valley, Idaho.

Harvey Collyer, Charlotte's husband and Marjorie's father, went down with the Titanic, one of over 1,500 people who perished on April 15, 1912.

Harvey Collyer had sold his grocery business and the family was headed from England to New York aboard the Titanic and then on to Idaho where he intended to start a fruit farm. Harvey also hoped a change of climate would help his wife's fragile health. When the Titanic sank, Harvey was holding all of the family's savings in his wallet.

After being rescued by the Carpathia, mother and daughter stayed briefly in New York and then made their way out to Idaho. Charlotte was determined to follow through on her husband's dream of beginning anew in America.

Charlotte was paid for her first-hand account of the sinking of the Titanic by the *San Francisco Call* newspaper. Her description of the sinking is considered one of the most graphic and touching among all the survivors who told their stories. Soon donations poured in to the newspaper to help support mother and daughter.

But after a short time in Idaho, reality hit Charlotte. Even with the encouragement and support of old friends she knew from England who greeted her when she arrived out west, Charlotte could not make a go of it. Charlotte wrote an open letter published in the *San Francisco Call* to all those who had tried to help her.

My Dear American Friends:

My heart is too full of gratitude for all the kindness and sympathy and generous help you have showered on me and my little daughter for me to begin to tell you even a part of what I feel. The greatest comfort to me in my sorrow, my greatest support in the struggle I have made to carry out my husband's wishes and to make a home for myself and Marjorie in this wonderful land, have been the way that God's love for us has been revealed to me in the loving welcome and aid received from all the dear friends my story has made for us.

I do not feel able to tell you in detail how I was at last compelled to give up my cherished plans and to return to England. I must leave that task to another.

But I could not bear to have one of you feel that I am ungrateful or unappreciative of your goodness. It is only that the experiences I have been through have left me without the necessary strength to make the fight alone. In my dead husband's name, and Marjorie's, and from my heart, I thank you all.

New York, June 8, 1912



signature-charlotte-collyer

Charlotte and Marjorie Collyer returned to England. The *San Francisco Call's* fund for the Collyer's relief came to \$2,182.

Charlotte later remarried and hoped for brighter days for herself and Marjorie. Unfortunately, Charlotte Collyer's health never improved and she died of tuberculosis on November 28, 1916. Charlotte's stepfather died in 1919.

An uncle took care of Marjorie after she was orphaned.

Marjorie Collyer married Roy Dutton in 1927. They had a child who died in infancy. Husband Roy died in 1943 at the age of 41. Marjorie soldiered on working as a receptionist in a doctor's office, but she never remarried.

Marjorie corresponded with Titanic historian and author Walter Lord. Marjorie wrote in 1955, "My father was drowned taking our worldly wealth with him, as in those days people were not as bank-minded as they are now. Since that time I have been blessed with bad luck and often wonder if it will ever give me a break, but it just seems to be my lot... I think my name was published at the time as having been drowned."

Marjorie suffered a stroke in the 1960s and was then unable to care for herself and moved into a nursing home. Marjorie Collyer Dutton's life of "bad luck" ended when she passed away at the age of 61 on February 26, 1965.

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Fake Instagram account spins tales of coyote attacks and hangover specials at Silver Lake's 365 by Whole Foods | The Eastsider LA

May 26, 2016

theeastsiderla.com

Tuesday, May 31, 2016



Photo by Jacqueline Fernandez

SILVER LAKE — Did a coyote bite former Sonic Youth band member Kim Gordon in the parking lot outside the new 365 by Whole Foods Store? Is the store really offering a Wednesday Hangover Special for patrons of the Cha Cha Lounge? Those were some of the stories shared online in recent days thanks to the Whole Foods Silver Lake Instagram. If you believed any of those stories, officials at Whole Foods want you to know that the company had nothing to do with them. In fact, the company is moving to have the impostor Whole Foods Silver Lake Instagram shut down.

The Instagram account that posted the stories and photos about the coyote attack and the hangover special describes itself as the “official” Instagram of 365 by Whole Foods. “Follow us for coupons, good times and local Silverlake gossip!” But that’s not the case, at least the part about it being an official Whole Foods Instagram.

“The account is a humorous spoof and not affiliated with 365 by Whole Foods Market,” said Whole Foods in a statement issued today. “We are taking steps via Instagram’s formal channels to have it removed. Our official 365 by Whole Foods Market Instagram is @365bywholefoods.”

They better move fast. The impostor account already more than 2,220 followers.

One comment

1. kbreak

May 31, 2016 at 2:10 pm

Wow that first fake report of coyotes was very convincing!

However everyone knows coke is out of style, that’s not so believable.

All them Millennials are rolling with Molly these days.

Contact The Eastsider (213) 255-5026 hello@theEastsiderLA.com

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The Fayum mummy portraits

mikedashhistory.com

A Blast From The Past

by Mike Dash

The Fayum mummy portraits

16 December 2014 6 January 2016 / allkindsofhistory



Some Fayum portraits, dating collectively to the period AD 70-250. The numbers refer to discussions in the text.

She is very beautiful. Her face is flawless: long and olive skinned, the nose long too, but neat and narrow, the brows crafted, the chin just firm enough to suggest a certain liveliness of character. She has dark hair, and one gets the distinct impression that it has potential for unruliness, but it has been called to order and fashionably styled, cut short over the ears in order to display expensive jewellery. A half-smile plays about her lips, and it does not seem too much to read a hint of amusement into her large brown eyes. It is easy to imagine meeting her at some elegant affair, for she seems *alive* – yet she is dead, and has been dead for rather more than 1,800 years [1].



Lacking realism: a stylised image of Christ and Mary from the Byzantine period.

There is something profoundly disconcerting about gazing into the face of someone who lived so long ago, and have them look straight back at you – long and level, quizzical – in a way that simulates direct connection. The unease we feel is only magnified when the circumstances are unusual, as they are in the case of our elegant brunette, for we are simply not

used to seeing such realistic portrayals of human faces from such a distant period. Old Masters may have captured character this well during the 1600s, but our portrait dates to Roman-era Egypt in around 190 AD, and is separated from modern schools of portraiture by well over a thousand year's worth of stylised iconography and crude medieval sketches. Add to this the sheer directness of the painting (which is quite devoid of background, indeed absent anything that might compete for our attention with those compelling eyes), and the grip that the image has on us is easier to understand.

The picture comes from the Fayum oasis, a wealthy district on the left bank of the Nile about 65 miles south of Cairo. It was dug up from a graveyard there more than a century ago, and is one of about a

live on eternally as we share these images. If they only knew...

• GoldParichutes

23 June 2015 at 4:14 pm

Exactly. Even though their names may have been forgotten (I'm not sure if there was a name on the sarcophagus) people will know what they look like even thousands of years after their deaths. In a way they have been granted the immortality that they wanted after death.

• f2

23 June 2015 at 6:44 pm

One of the examples at the Metropolitan Museum of Art shows incredible detail, including a scar from an eye surgery. It's so interesting to see ancient Egyptians portrayed realistically without much stylization or idealization.

12. Pingback: Ancient places, modern faces; the Fayum panel portraits | James Mulraine

13. Gunnar

12 August 2015 at 5:35 pm

I am of the opinion (haven't seen this expressed elsewhere) that those wealthy enough to have burials like this may often have had their portraits painted BEFORE they died, when young, to depict them at their "best". I've never seen a Fayum portrait of an elderly person, but surely SOME of these people must have made it to old age. We see a similar thing today in newspapers, where people die in their 80's or 90's, but the photos of them published were taken 30 to 50 years prior.

14. Pingback: Newcastle-Upon-Tyne: City of the Sharp-Nosed... | PAIDES

15. Facebook posts that mention The Fayum Mummy Portraits. David Hess

28 August 2015 at 10:02 am

[...] There is a fantastic essay on these portraits on a site called "Blast from the Past" by Mike Dash. Really well written and researched essays on all kinds of interesting and obscure historical topics. Be warned, you will lose days reading them all [...]

• Facebook posts that mention The Fayum Mummy Portraits. KT Russell

28 August 2015 at 10:19 am

[...] Thank you just my kind of thing! [...]

16. betsy

28 October 2015 at 11:53 am

A great read. Thanks!

17. Facebook posts that mention The Fayum Mummy Portraits. Australian Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Materials

10 February 2016 at 11:47 pm

[...] To find out more about the Fayum Mummy Portraits, this is a fabulous #longread from Historian Mike Dash about their significance and meaning [...]

18. thenewcollector

24 February 2016 at 4:27 pm

I was recently introduced to Fayum portraits, and my interest (and a google search) brought me here. Thank you! What a fascinating and well researched essay. I look forward to reading more of your entries on other historical topics.

19. Pingback: Fayum mummy portraits: the earliest painted portraits – That's How The Light Gets In

20. Mike Whitehead
4 May 2016 at 9:55 am

Real people from Ancient Egypt – a fascinating article.

21. Kara Cooney
4 May 2016 at 12:28 pm

These portraits always remind me that the ancient Egyptians were real people. Sometimes, even Egyptologists need reminding...

▫ Vicki Reeves
4 May 2016 at 7:17 pm

Kara, thank you for the link to a fabulous, interesting, informative article. I've been fascinated by mummy portraits since I first saw them at the 'original' Getty villa years ago.

22. Eric Marsolek
4 May 2016 at 12:44 pm

#6. Fayum hipster before it was, um, popular.

23. Marina Nunzi
4 May 2016 at 2:59 pm

These are very late egyptian portraits.. of the age after the Roman conquest. They are too similar to Roman portraits, even in their hairstyle, jewels and clothes.

▫ John Brennan
4 May 2016 at 3:51 pm

Too similar for...?

■ Marina Nunzi
4 May 2016 at 3:58 pm

For being "original" egyptian portraits, belonging to the age of true Pharaohs, when Egypt was a vast kingdom and a free land and had art, picture and sculpture of its own. Foreign influences are far too plain to see here.

■ nancy bonds whittle
4 May 2016 at 4:02 pm

reading the article is a good thing

◆ Aryshta Dean
4 May 2016 at 7:18 pm

Lets remember these people are mainly Greeks and Romans; the ruling class of the time ... look at those noses!

24. John Walton

4 May 2016 at 3:05 pm

They look like greeks to me

• Sher Spears

4 May 2016 at 4:02 pm

They look just like Egyptians today. Looking at them I feel I have met some of these people.

■ Jabulani Pharoah Sefatsa

4 May 2016 at 4:17 pm

Nothing like real Egyptians(kemites) they look Greek or Roman

■ Gary Beddow

4 May 2016 at 4:23 pm

They sure didn't smile much for their portraits did they. They look mostly Caucasian. ?

■ Catherine Christina

4 May 2016 at 5:59 pm

You people saying these are not really Egyptians just because they are from the Roman period are misinformed. These fayum portraits have Roman style realism instead of stylized Egyptian art but that doesn't mean they are not Egyptian. Tests have shown that the mummies who these portraits are of have more biologically in common with ancient Egyptians from dynasties previous than they have any other ethnicity. A mesh of cultures is what these paintings represent; Egyptian's still using mummification but with a touch of greco-roman style. The majority of the fayum portraits ARE indigenous Egyptians, it's believed only 30% of Fayium was Greek! Egyptians took on alot of the roman culture and that's what were seeing here in the portraits for the most part.

"Under Greco-Roman rule, Egypt hosted several Greek settlements, mostly concentrated in Alexandria, but also in a few other cities, where Greek settlers lived alongside some seven to ten million native Egyptians. Native Egyptians also came to settle in Faiyum from all over the country, notably the Nile Delta, Upper Egypt, Oxyrhynchus and Memphis, to undertake the labor involved in the land reclamation process, as attested by personal names, local cults and recovered papyri.

While some try to claim that the Fayum portraits represent Greek settlers in Egypt, that is incorrect. The Faiyum portraits instead reflect the complex synthesis of the predominant Egyptian culture and that of the elite Greek MINORITY in the city. The dental morphology of the Roman-period Faiyum mummies was compared with that of earlier Egyptian populations, and was found to be "much more closely akin" to that of ancient Egyptians than to Greeks or other European populations. It is estimated that 30 percent of the population of Faiyum was Greek during the Ptolemaic period, with the rest being native Egyptians. By the Roman period, much of the "Greek" population of Faiyum was made-up of either Hellenized Egyptians (Egyptians who took on Greek/Roman culture) or people of mixed Egyptian-Greek origins. The Fayum portraits are a wonderful glimpse into the faces of Egypt's past."

• Brooke Christenson

4 May 2016 at 4:25 pm

They would have had the skin tones of modern Mediterranean peoples.

■ Anthony Svokos
5 May 2016 at 5:40 am

It isn't misinformed. The Greeks were not minorities in the area. Yes, the ruling elite was Greek, but there was also a large Greek community in the area by the time of Roman rule. There had already been centuries of emigration from the Mediterranean by this time. The area was Hellenistic when this artistic funerary tradition was dominant. There was a strong Greco-Roman presence in the Fayum and all the surrounding areas of Egypt for centuries before and after the Romans took control. Alexander the Great chose the site for the building of his capital city Alexandria, and the Greek Ptolemaic empire which succeeded him adapted Egyptian customs to create a unique Greco-Egyptian civilization which encompassed Greeks, Romans, Egyptians, and Jews. Of course some of the DNA will belong to Egyptians, they were a huge part of the life in the area at this time. The portraits are one of many manifestations of the hybridization of cultures that had been an active policy of both the native Egyptian priesthood and the Greco-Roman rulers since the days of Alexander.

■ Catherine Christina
5 May 2016 at 12:54 pm

I think saying misinformed isn't wrong when some early commenters were suggesting the fayum portraits are total foreigners to Egypt and that the true Egyptians were a totally different race of people, which is false. And 30% referred to the settlers in the location of Fayum, not the whole of Egypt.

Anyway, Anthony (nice name!💎💎) You pretty much said much of what I said in a way more informative, better way. I did say that these portraits show the mixture of cultures. Many Egyptians were hellenised (indigenous people taking on GrecoRoman culture and customs), some interbred, and not forgetting, many of the Greeks/Romans took on Egyptian religion too, with a GrecoRoman twist. These mummies are a great example of the merging of cultures, mummification; an Egyptian religious tradition still took place, but with Greco Roman realism style portraits.

Only 900 mummy portraits have been found and if the mummies of these portraits that were tested have more biologically in common with Egyptians of the past then they do with Greeks, Romans or any other country nearby Egypt, that goes against the notion you see in the comments; that the fayum mummies are simply foreigners. The portrait mummies showing more relation to Egyptian mummies from earlier dynasties, than they show relation to Greeks and Romans is significant information when it comes to these portraits and how Egyptian they are overall.

25. Katiebug Lynn
4 May 2016 at 3:10 pm

This is great!!!!

26. Lisa Allen
4 May 2016 at 3:15 pm

Is it just me, or is anyone else reminded of the "big eyes" paintings of Margaret Keane??

27. hillarypeatfield

4 May 2016 at 3:26 pm

Reblogged this on Hillary Peatfield and commented: Looking into these eyes is traveling through time.

28. Stew Ladd

4 May 2016 at 4:10 pm

Eerily beautiful.

29. Allison Grimsley Hudson

4 May 2016 at 4:12 pm

These portraits are extraordinary.

30. Anthony Milner OConnor

4 May 2016 at 4:14 pm

Cool that most of them (?) are done in wax which makes them look fresh and alive.

Reply

31. Laura Waskiewicz

4 May 2016 at 4:18 pm

I have seen some of these at the University of Michigan Archaeology museum. I have always wished the Portraits could talk to hear their story.

32. Katherine Abrams

4 May 2016 at 4:23 pm

They look like the portraits from Pompeii. Beautiful. Hauntingly familiar.

33. Tristan_Samuels

4 May 2016 at 4:26 pm

Looks like a lot interracial relationships during this time in Egypt. I wonder if anyone has done a study on race mixing in Late Antique Egypt.

34. Maga El Nokaly

4 May 2016 at 4:36 pm

Not only real but fashionable. Some of the hairdos are spectacular

35. Tweets that mention The Fayum Mummy Portraits. Lady~Rebel~Danger says

4 May 2016 at 5:55 pm

[...] I am such a nerd, geek, whatever ya choose to call it! I am so fascinated by Egyptian History, archeology is so [...]

36. Debora Scatuccio

4 May 2016 at 5:57 pm

Once while visiting a museum in Canada, I saw one of these portraits. The woman looked strikingly familiar. Then one of my children stated, "Mommy, that lady looks just like you."

It was a moment I will never forget.

Art has always been stylized from one generation to the next. Many people of Italian-Greek and Egyptian ancestry have similar feature. As do I and the woman in the portrait who I resemble.

May there memories be eternal! May their souls be blessed!

37. Edward Piercey
4 May 2016 at 6:01 pm

Almost like they are standing right next to you.

Christina Riggs was nice enough to respond to an email I sent when I was working on a college paper back c. 2001. "First of all" she wrote, "there's no such thing as 'just a student'." Love her work

38. Billie Ritter Ford
4 May 2016 at 6:04 pm

Long article, but very interesting. These folks could have been contemporaries of the early church. Their parents could have sat at the feet of Jesus, or followed the apostles.....

39. The most trending history news as collected by Trendolizer
4 May 2016 at 6:16 pm

[...] Trending story found an hour ago on mikedashhistory.com [...]

40. Donald Paul Vincent
4 May 2016 at 7:16 pm

Amazingly detailed. Some of them look as if they could have been photographs.

41. Joanne Ginty
4 May 2016 at 8:51 pm

Looking at these beautiful portraits is as close as we'll ever come to truly gazing into the eyes of the past.

42. Peter Bertelli
4 May 2016 at 9:41 pm

Regardless of the ethnicity of the people portrayed here, I find these portraits moving, they were the photographs of the era. Just looking at these brought me sharply back to a visit to the British Museum when I was young and impressionable and remember now how clearly seeing such portraits on the dead spooked and moved me deeply.

43. Blog posts that mention The Fayum Mummy Portraits. The Indiana Jones Minute says
4 May 2016 at 9:43 pm

[...] Have you ever wondered what some of those mummified ancient Egyptians looked like in real-life? Mike Dash has a fantastic piece about just that. And it's filled with really spectacular pictures [...]

44. Gilles Bois
4 May 2016 at 11:22 pm

Such interesting portraits. Could people have had their mortuary portraits painted in life and put away for future use? Or were there a range of stereotypical portraits approximating all the known facial variations? Rather like modern street artists assemble an approximation to live subjects from

a standard range of stereotypical features (hence the speed with which they work).

45. ms_levora_broussard
5 May 2016 at 12:13 am

The Amarna Period (18th Dynasty) marked a significant change in Art where the subjects were made to look more human-like vs. the Greek stone sculptures & statues. The Fayum paintings gave life to the individual by adding color and capturing their essence. These portraits were likely done while the person was still alive. This would have been post Hyksos (14th, 15th, 16th Dynasties) with the Shepherd Kings & Greek Hellenists in Egypt... Now we have cameras to take photos. Back in the early 1980's there were little pamphlets that would circulate the mail encouraging people to go to art school.

46. Tajalli Patrice McDonough
5 May 2016 at 4:29 am

Really interesting. (and now I really must try to sleep)

47. Mark Leahy
5 May 2016 at 6:21 am

Number 8 is grumpy!

48. Sharon Giesfeldt
5 May 2016 at 3:48 pm

One of my favorite topics in AH 101 lectures. The amazingly real likenesses of the Fayum mummy portraits

49. Monty Miller
5 May 2016 at 8:45 pm

Very cool article.

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A Fayum painting in situ, still resting on its original linen-clad mummy.

thousand such images, dating from around the time of Christ until 300 AD or later, that have survived long years underground and now lie scattered among the collections of the world's great museums. Collectively, they are usually known as "Fayum paintings," or sometimes "Fayum mummy portraits," for most of them were recovered wrapped up in the burial linens of ancient mummies, placed in the spot where the face would once have been. They are the oldest painted portraits to have survived from anywhere in the world.

The paintings are the products of a multicultural society, one in which Romans mixed with native Egyptians and with Greeks descended from the Macedonian armies of Alexander the Great to create a polyglot community. The vast majority come from two sites south of the oasis, er-Rubayat (the necropolis of ancient Philadelphia) and Hawara (associated in Roman times with Arsinoe); they combine the religious imagery of Rome and Egypt, and production of them seems to have ceased shortly before the final Christianisation of the Roman Empire. Each painting shows the head and shoulders of a man, woman or child and is painted on a sliver of wood measuring around 12 inches by 6 [30 by 15cm]. The portraits are, therefore, very nearly life-sized.

Fayum paintings have been celebrated for more than a century for the vividness and immediacy of the connection that they seem to establish between modern viewers and long-dead Egyptians. "They tempt us to imagine," the archaeologist John Prag remarks, "that we can literally and figuratively come face to face with the past." For John Berger, "the Fayum portraits touch us as if they had been painted last month." And, reviewing an exhibition of portraits held at the Metropolitan Museum in New York at the turn of the century, Holland Cotter of the *New York Times* detected a whole gamut of human emotions in them – "despair, bafflement, anger" – and likened visiting the show to "attending a party among friends."

"The faces certainly seem familiar," Cotter wrote.

"The prettiest girl from high school is here, and that smug 10-to-6'er she married. So is a distant, distant cousin, and a barely remembered college chum, and even an old flame you'd prefer to forget.

"And there are strangers who aren't really strangers. Didn't you see that elderly gent in the subway and brush past that unisex youth in the street? And who is that woman across the room with the emerald necklace and stricken face? An Anne or an Alice, she looks overwhelmed. By what? You should go over and talk to her, but she's off in a world of her own."



The Fayum oasis, showing the areas where the mummy portraits were found. From Roberts. Click to view in higher

It is worth pausing here to consider in a little more detail exactly why the Fayum paintings have the effect on us they do. It is certainly true, as Cotter says, that they appear to capture personality as well as mere appearance. Stripped of their funereal context, moreover, they are naturalistic, indeed in important respects modernist in style, and this (as Christina Riggs astutely points out) helps them to appeal to today's Western sensibilities. They lack the pomposity that one sometimes finds in formal portraiture, and their large, dark eyes recall popular kitsch styles. They have an indefinably familiar look.

But there is more to the mummy portraits than that. They are, for one thing, soulful, in a literal as well as a colloquial sense, for these are images that were specifically designed to accompany their owners into the afterlife. And, most importantly of all, they look right at us while we're viewing them. With the exception of a handful of rough near-caricatures [8] – which seem more likely to be cheaply-commissioned images of faithful servants than the products of particularly

resolution.

unskilled artists – every known mummy portrait, whether pictured head-on or in three-quarters perspective, gives the impression of inviting conversation.

It is very easy to read stories into many of the paintings. Among the most moving of the mummy portraits is one showing the face of a boy who died young, aged perhaps around 10, sometime late in the second century. His head has been almost completely shaved, leaving only two small, square tufts atop his forehead, and he wears a black necklace from which hangs the sort of container in which amulets protecting from the evil eye were placed [5]. Salima Ikram suggests that this unique hairstyle is evidence that the boy had been desperately ill for quite some time – long enough for his frantic parents to have his hair ritually shorn at a local shrine in an attempt to please some deity. “If the child was cured,” Ikram sums up the local customs of the time, “the tufts would be shaved off at the shrine amidst a celebration, and the hair buried... loose, or enclosed in a clay ball.”



Another evocative Fayum image, much more stylised this time, is this fragment of a larger painting which has snapped in two and now gives the impression that the sitter is peeking out at us from behind a screen.

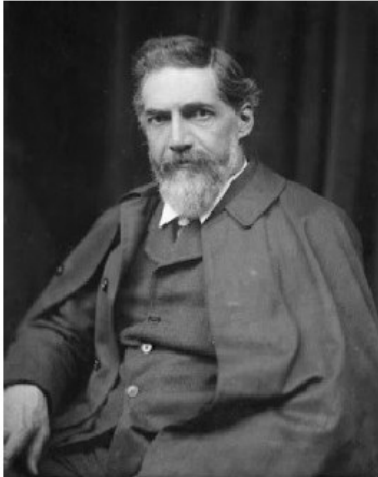
Seen from this perspective, it is easy to guess that the strange potpourri of symbols that are so prominent in the young boy's portrait were the result of a desperate case, long protracted, in which a much-loved child slowly declined and became mortally ill before his parents' eyes. It is surely likely, Ikram notes, that in such circumstances a family would use “all varieties of medical and religious cures available to them, regardless of whether they were Greek, Roman or Egyptian.” The tragedy, of course, is that these efforts at a cure all failed, for this was a boy who died.

The Fayum mummy paintings have been known for quite some time. They were never really hidden, merely buried – along with the men, women and children they depicted – in rough coffins in ordinary cemeteries. Some must have been dug up well over a thousand years ago, but the earliest discovery of Fayum portraits that we have record of dates only to 1616, when the Italian traveller Pietro della Valle (1586-1642) visited Egypt on his way to India. Della Valle passed through Saqqara – a vast necropolis, filled with the crumbling remains of ancient pyramids, which had once been the main burial ground for the people of Memphis – and there was offered two mummies, each adorned with a lifelike painting of the man inside the ancient linen wrappings.

Whether della Valle's mummies had been brought up from Fayum or were uncovered in Saqqara (and thus represent an otherwise unknown cache of paintings) is now impossible to say – but, almost miraculously, these early traveller's souvenirs survived their owner's years of wandering through Palestine and southern India, and returned with him to Italy in 1626. Della Valle later published a description of them, complete with engravings of the portraits, but his work was treated as a curiosity. Reading between the lines of his account, it seems likely that the paintings arrived in Italy in pretty poor condition – dirty, crusted with sand, and largely lacking the lustre of the restored paintings that are so striking today. Probably that explains the indifferent quality of the engravings, and the almost complete lack of interest displayed in Italy in the portraits themselves.

Whatever the reason for this neglect, it was not until early in the 19th century that any significant quantity of mummy portraits were gathered together. The collector in this case was Henry Salt, a noted explorer who was then the British consul in Egypt. Salt assembled a group of portraits – from sources that remain obscure – that eventually found their way into the Louvre in Paris, and he was followed a few decades later by a Vienna merchant and collector by the name of Theodor Graf. Graf was fortunate enough to visit Egypt in 1887, just after an ancient graveyard had been uncovered and enthusiastically plundered in Fayum. A large number of the bodies recovered from this cemetery turned out to have been buried complete with mummy portraits, and Graf was able to assemble several dozen examples – stripped, sadly, of both their context and their provenance – by trawling through Cairo's shady art markets.

This time the portraits were in good condition, and they aroused intense interest everywhere. It was not long before their true source was revealed; the pioneer British archaeologist William Flinders Petrie, who



William Flinders Petrie, one of the fathers of modern archaeology, made two visits to Fayum. His careful excavation records supply most of the information we have about how the mummy portraits were discovered.

came to the the oasis early in 1888 in search of something else entirely – traces of a lost labyrinth, supposedly associated with the pyramid of Amenemhet III (c.1800 BC), and described by the ancient Greek historian Herodotus as containing no fewer than 3,000 rooms – uncovered several groups of graves containing Fayum paintings. Unlike Graf, he kept good notes, and did what he could to conserve the paintings that his men recovered, even when they were in atrocious condition. Many of his finds have since been restored using modern techniques.

Judging from Petrie's excavation records – the only ones of any value from this period – most of the portraits were excavated from shallow brick pits in abandoned cemeteries. In a few cases mummies were found encased in basic wood coffins, but for the most part they were discovered "huddled away... irregularly in any sort of hole... lumped together." It has been suggested that the mummies, and the portraits, were probably placed in a family mausoleum at first, and visited regularly for religious ceremonies, being finally buried only several generations later, when all the immediate family were dead. That might explain why most of these expensive mummies have been roughly treated; in some

cases a cloth had been laid loosely over the portrait, but many were directly exposed to the scouring of the Egyptian sands, and it seems almost a miracle that the fragile images they bore survived nearly two millennia in their graves.

Certainly the portraits are delicate. Those found in Philadelphia were typically executed in tempera – that is, using egg whites to produce a finish resembling watercolour. Those that come from Arsinoe are more sophisticated, being painted in encaustic – a technique that involves mixing pigments with soft wax, applying it to slivers of sycamore tree or lime, and sealing the image with heat to produce results that resemble oil paintings.

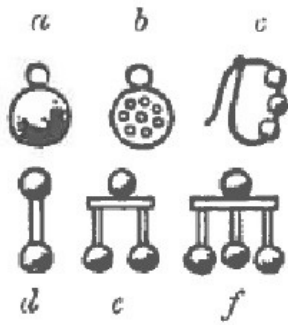


One of the few Fayum portraits to bear a name is this fragment identifying it – in Greek – as "Sarapi." She would have been a devotee of Sarapis, a Greco-Egyptian god whose cult had been heavily promoted during the Ptolemaic period (323-30 BC).

the Fayum images were made, however, tells us little about exactly when they were painted – or, much more controversially, why. It is to those questions that we now turn, with the observation that the answers tell us almost as much about ourselves as they do about the Egypt of the first and second centuries AD.

Resolving the problem of when the mummy portraits were produced requires a good deal of research and not a little faith. We know so little of the histories of Philadelphia or Arsinoe that it is rare for Fayum paintings to be datable by their physical context alone, although one group found further south, at Antinoopolis, can be assumed to date to no earlier than 130, since the Emperor Hadrian founded the city in that year. Other than that, though, little is certain, and much of the dating that has been done involves reconciling the testimony of contradictory internal indicators, principally the evidence of fashion,

styles of jewellery and of palaeography – the study of handwriting. It has been argued, for example, that portraits showing bearded men can also be dated to no earlier than Hadrian's day, since it was he who reintroduced the style for beards after centuries of clean shaving in Rome. But contemporary statuary tells us that Greeks never entirely abandoned the fashion for facial hair, and in a multicultural society like early Christian era Fayum, that fact alone is sufficient to muddy waters.



Evolving styles of earrings – all roughly datable – found in the Fayum mummy portraits. From Edgar.

Much attention, similarly, has been devoted to the fashion choices of the subjects of the mummy portraits, and especially their hairstyles. Many of the older women in the portraits, for instance, wear their hair high, piled up and secured with a large pin, a fashion very characteristic of the Flavian age (69-96 AD). And many of the youths are clad simply in white, a style closely associated with the temples of the day [2]. Enough is known from other sources of the march of fashion in the ancient world for this sort of dating to yield plausible answers to a number of mysteries.

Still, it is well worth noting that such results can still be unreliable. We don't know, for example, whether styles changed more slowly, or were clung onto for longer, in a backwater like Fayum

than in Rome. And when an alternative dating method can be brought to bear, the results are more confusing than comforting. Riggs cites a case in which a female portrait was confidently dated, from its hairstyle, to the reign of the emperor Septimus Severus (193-211), only for palaeography to date the same portrait to about a hundred years earlier, and a study of the subject's jewellery to suggest that it was painted almost two full centuries before Severus's reign.

That's enough to suggest to me that any attempts to date specific Fayum portraits should be viewed with caution. One or two scholars have placed their first occurrence at about 150 BC; others have suggested that the last may have been produced as late as some time in the 400s. Sticking with the general consensus, it is difficult to do more than conclude that most were probably painted in the period 50 to 250 AD – but even that implies that some at least were probably contemporary with the writing of the gospels and the deposit of the Dead Sea Scrolls.



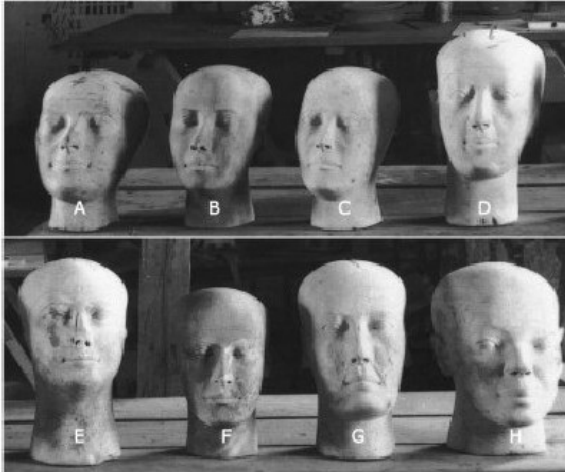
This mummy portrait – like many others – shows signs of having been cut down from its original size in order to fit its casing. One group of archaeologists has used this evidence to argue that the paintings were made from life, and only later adapted to funerary purposes.

If we ask *why* the Fayum paintings were produced, though, we begin to encounter problems – puzzles that go to the heart of what the images were meant for and what they really show. These questions have sparked several important disputes, for there is almost no scholarly consensus as to whether the portraits were primarily intended to be shown in the home, or were funerary objects designed to be displayed only in a mausoleum. Without knowing the answer to that problem, it is hard to know whether these images were painted when their subjects were alive or dead – even whether they are really pictures of individuals at all.

To begin with what we do know, or can reasonably deduce, it seems almost certain that mummy portraits – or at least the *burials* of mummy portraits – were a product of beliefs about the afterlife. Every Egyptian was thought to have a *ka* and *ba*, which survived death and continued to thrive so long as they could reunite periodically with their bodily remains; it was for this reason that so much time, money and effort was poured into the creation of elaborate mummies.

The *ka* (or, very broadly, life force) resided either in a mummy or in some image of a dead person – for the really rich, typically a statue. The *ba*, meanwhile (depicted in tomb paintings as a bird, and roughly equivalent to 'soul' or 'spirit'), could leave the body to find food and drink, but had to return to its tomb each night with the nourishment needed by the *ka*.

Since it was vital the *ka* and *ba* could be reunited in their mummy, it was also important to Egyptians that mummies could be readily identified. Written names would often be attached to them, and a handful of tombs dating to the Old Kingdom (c.2700-2200 BC) contain objects known as false or “reserve” heads – three dimensional head-and-neck models of apparently real people, which seem to have been designed to stand on the floor of the burial chamber. It seems plausible that both false heads and Fayum paintings were meant to aid in the identification of the deceased, and help the *ka* and *ba* to quickly relocate their mummies. They might also have been intended to provide a proxy that would allow to *ka* to survive if its mummy was destroyed.



A group of false heads from Old Kingdom tombs, excavated in 1913. They seem to have served much the same purpose as the Fayum paintings, produced 2,500 years later.

It is also possible to make a second statement: that the Fayum paintings are not images of everyday Egyptians, as they are often thought to be. The people that they depict could afford fine clothes and jewellery; one Fayum woman, David L. Thompson notes, wears a golden wreath and three expensive necklaces set with gems – “an orgy of gold and emeralds.” [9] When they died, their lives were celebrated with elaborate funerals and concluded in the time-consuming, costly process of mummification. These were not luxuries available to every man, woman and child in Roman Egypt. The paintings depict members of an elite.

As to the question of whether or not the subjects of the paintings sat for their own portraits – that is much more difficult to answer. At first glance it does not appear unlikely, given the high quality of much of the work and the sheer vivacity of the portrayals. A few subjects, such

as the shaven-headed boy, were plainly ill when they were painted, but for the most part the men and women in these pictures look healthy – indeed, in the prime of life.



A wall painting from the house of Terrentius Neo, entombed during the eruption of Vesuvius in 79 AD. Its focus on head-and-shoulders portraiture and its use of perspective are both reminiscent of the Fayum paintings.

We know, too, that portrait paintings could be found in many Roman households in this era. Pliny the Elder wrote that “realistic portraiture... has for many generations been the highest ambition of art,” and family pictures dating to the same period as the Fayum images have been uncovered during excavations at Pompeii. Such portraits were probably affordable even to moderately wealthy Romans; a scrap of papyrus – found in Egypt but written at Misenum, in the Bay of Naples, some time in the second century – bears a note written by a sailor by the name of Apion, informing his father that he is sending a small picture of himself back home.

A second argument in favour of the idea that the paintings were drawn from life lies in the shape and form of the examples that survive. Images that were, it seems, originally painted as straightforward rectangles have been hacked and cut to fit them to a mummy’s shape [8, 9]. If they were not originally intended as household portraits, the logic runs, why not paint them the right shape and size in the first place?

Yet there are also scraps of evidence hinting that the paintings show their subjects as they looked, not in the prime of life, but at the moment of their death. Facial reconstructions attempted a few years ago on the skulls of two mummies associated with specific Fayum paintings produced images that very closely match the faces of the dead. That suggests that these portraits were sketched around the time of death, not drawn to take their place on some family mantlepiece years earlier.



One of a pair of Fayum paintings which remain attached to their original mummies. A reconstruction of the mummy's face (right) suggests the essential accuracy of the portrait – and implies that it was painted at around the time of the man's death.

One further feature of the mummy portraits may be equally revealing. It is remarkable how few of the Fayum images show elderly men and women; a large proportion, conversely, depict healthy-looking boys and girls who stand at the cusp of adulthood. Does this imply that late adolescence was a dangerous time to be alive in Roman Egypt? Perhaps it does – but an alternative explanation, which seems a good deal more persuasive, takes as its starting point the belief of Egyptians of this period that images could influence the forms that souls took in the afterlife. In this interpretation (as Dominic Montserrat observes), mummy portraits were very carefully

created not as facsimiles of real people, but as ideals. They show the faces in which, their subjects hoped, they would live on in an equally ideal eternity. It is certainly an attractive idea – though also one that, if true, says interesting things about the self-perceptions of the sages, hard-faced men and Roman matrons who feature in a number of the Fayum portraits [3, 4, 7].



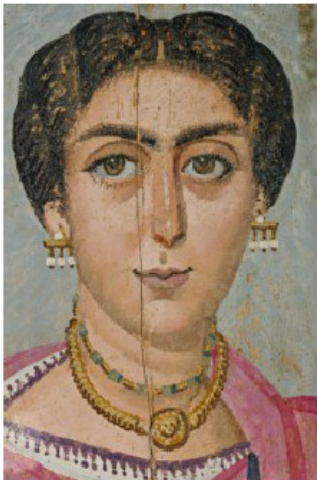
Many Fayum paintings – like this portrait of a girl dated to roughly 120-150 AD – feature subjects with abnormally large eyes. Are these paintings examples of Roman-era kitsch, the products of artists of limited talent – or a deliberate feature with religious overtones?

Let us assume, then, for a moment that the Fayum paintings are not what they appear to be – that they are not portraits drawn from life. The implications of this thought experiment are startling. Would it matter quite so much if images intended for interment were not entirely realistic? And, if the paintings can be seen as part of the rituals of death, might that explain why they contain such strong symbolic elements?

Consider, for example, the almost cartoonish prominence of the eyes found in these paintings. There are many mummy portraits in which an otherwise natural-looking face has been distorted out of recognition by the need to accommodate such eyes. If only one of two examples of this trait existed, it might be possible to explain them as the work of poor artists unskilled in perspective. The truth, however, is that this feature can be found in almost every mummy portrait. Might this suggest the largeness of the subjects' eyes reflects the ideas of the time? Ancient Egyptians believed that eyes were windows on the soul, so it is no surprise (so Thompson says) that we find them "emphasised, and even exaggerated, since... the mummy was thought to be [the soul's] permanent abode."

It is for these reasons that Christina Riggs insists that we delude ourselves in reading character or beauty into mummy portraits. "Feeling empathy for long-dead individuals says more about ourselves than it does about the ancient society or individual in question," she writes. And John Prag takes things one distressing step further by suggesting that the Fayum images were most likely the products of "something approaching a production line, in which each painter quite naturally built up his own formulae and his own tricks." Those 'tricks,' he concludes, included creating a recognisable group of basic facial shapes that could be modified quite easily. Such models could be easily deployed when a new commission was received, then modified to create distinctive individual "looks" by the addition of beards or hairstyles.

It seems a dispiriting idea. If Prag is right, then the distinctive traits that make the mummy portraits memorable are in the end "simply the quirks of a workshop or painter," and the antique Egyptians who



One of a pair of paintings dating to around 190 AD which John Prag believes suggest that the faces in the mummy portraits are variations on a set of basic types and shapes...

gaze out at us from Fayum portraits are not real people at all. They are merely avatars – representations of something real that are not real in themselves.

It's possible that this is true, and Prag is undeniably correct to draw attention to the similarities between the faces in some of the mummy portraits. But there is an alternative explanation, which has been advanced by other archaeologists, and that is that some paintings show close relatives. Perhaps the two women whom Prag sees as the product of a harried, unimaginative artist's brush are really mother and daughter.



It bears considerable similarities to a second painting, also dated to c. 190 AD. The earrings are different and the mouth is wider – but do the similarities in hair, eyebrows and facial structure suggest a family relationship, or the output of an ancient production line?

And perhaps the curious resemblance between the brunette on whose beauty we reflected at the beginning of this post and a young, bearded man who has the same sort of eyebrows and the same sort of nose, and whose portrait was dug up from the same graveyard in Philadelphia, exists merely because they once were brother and sister. [1&6]

My thanks to Joanne Backhouse of the Department of Archaeology, Classics and Egyptology, University of Liverpool, for drawing my attention to the phenomenon of false heads.

Sources

Holland Cotter. "Expressions so ancient, yet familiar." *New York Times*, 18 February 2000; C.C. Edgar. "On the dating of the Fayum portraits." In *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 25 (1905); Suzanna M. Grant. "Two 'Fayum' portraits." *Bulletin of the Art Institute of Chicago* 72 (1978); Salima Ikram. "Barbering the beardless: a possible explanation for the tufted hairstyle depicted in the 'Fayum' portrait of a young boy." In *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 89 (2003); Dominic Montserrat. "The representation of young males in 'Fayum portraits'." In *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 79 (1993); A.J.N.W. Prag. "Proportion and personality in the Fayum Portraits." *British Museum Studies in Ancient Egypt and Sudan* 3 (2002); Christina Riggs. "Facing the dead: recent research on the funerary art of Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt." In *American Journal of Archaeology* 106 (2002); Paul Roberts. *Mummy Portraits from Roman Egypt*. London: the British Museum Press, 2008; David L. Thompson. "Four 'Fayum Portraits' in the Getty Museum." In *The J. Paul Getty Museum Journal* 2 (1975); David L. Thompson. *Mummy Portraits in the J. Paul Getty Museum*. Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 1982; Susan Walker (ed.) *Ancient Faces. Mummy Portraits from Roman Egypt*. New York: Routledge, 2000; John Wortley. "The origins of Christian veneration of body parts." In *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions* 233 (2006).

65 thoughts on "The Fayum mummy portraits"

1. Gale Molinari

16 December 2014 at 11:39 pm

Reblogged this on galesmind and commented: Fascinating article and the faces haunt you.

2. koehlerjoni

17 December 2014 at 12:52 am

This was a really interesting article. Thanks for sharing it with me.

3. Pingback: The Fayum mummy portraits

4. zhevni

17 December 2014 at 9:58 pm

Interesting, thanks!

5. myeagermind

22 December 2014 at 2:13 pm

Reblogged this on Lenora's Culture Center and Foray into History

6. rachelmeeke

22 January 2015 at 9:11 pm

I love love love reading your stuff. Great piece as always. Sharing!

▪ allkindsofhistory

23 January 2015 at 10:15 am

Thank you for your kind words. It's great to be back at work, and I have a couple of pieces on mysteries coming up next month that I hope will interest you.

7. Jack

28 March 2015 at 6:03 pm

Reblogged this on Tome and Tomb

8. worldwidekitsch

18 April 2015 at 5:14 pm

It does look like work from the 1800's! This was the neoclassical mission, to reignite the Greco-Roman aesthetic. The problem is, many Greek and Roman-era works were destroyed by the iconoclasts (much like ISIL today). The better the work was, the faster it was destroyed. So we don't really know what the best looked like. But, based on these portraits, we can imagine it was fantastic.

9. GoldParachutes

20 June 2015 at 9:09 pm

The level of detail and scale is absolutely amazing. The face is so lifelike looking and reminds me of the level of accuracy found during the later middle ages portraits.

10. CatboyMac

21 June 2015 at 3:31 am

I always thought ancient artists were more than capable of making realistic art, but they rarely did because stylized art was so in-demand.

11. Seagull66

23 June 2015 at 1:29 am

That's what gets me. The realism on display here is stunning. Fast forward several hundred years and it almost seems to be gone, not to return for quite a while. The most fun part of all of this, for me, is that these portraits have done exactly what they set out to do. Some part of these folks now

Fingers Found on Campground Picnic Table in East Grand Forks kstp.com



Updated: 05/28/2016 2:09 PM

Created: 05/28/2016 2:00 PM

Police in East Grand Forks are trying to figure out how what appears to be two human fingers ended up on a picnic table at a campground.

Lt. Rod Hajcek with the East Grand Forks Police Department told **ABC affiliate WDAZ-TV** a citizen walking through the campground at Red River State Recreation Area found them about 5 p.m. Thursday.

Police say they appear to be a middle and a ring finger. "I looked at them, they had fingernails on them, they look human," Hajcek told WDAZ.

Authorities aren't sure if the fingers were severed during an accident or if foul play was involved. They have been sent to the state crime lab for further investigation, and to confirm whether or not they are human. If they are, investigators will get prints from the fingers and compare them to fingerprints on file in an effort to identify who the fingers belong to.

"I don't believe in my 26 years here that we've ever had human body parts come into the office," Hajcek said.

Meanwhile, the strange discovery has been the main campfire conversation at the campground.

Information from WDAZ-TV.



Photo: Image from WDAZ video

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Finland military exercise mistaken for invasion - BBC News

bbc.com



Finland military exercise mistaken for invasion

By News from Elsewhere... ...as found by BBC Monitoring

- 31 May 2016



Finland's military held large-scale training exercises last week

Image copyrightFinnish Army

Finland's armed forces caused alarm on one of the country's own islands when an after-dark training exercise was mistaken for a real invasion, it's reported.

Kamsholmen island resident Bjarne Winberg watched as a large boat docked near his house and unloaded a group of uniformed men carrying

rucksacks and what looked like guns, the Ilta-Sanomat newspaper reports. When the group headed into the forest, Mr Winberg hopped into his own boat, fled the island and called the emergency services. "Of course I was scared," he tells the paper.

It subsequently transpired that last week's unexpected late-night arrival, was part of the military's spring training exercises. What isn't clear is whether Kamsholmen was a planned stop on the military's route. While the local Ostnyland newspaper quoted a defence spokesman as saying the island wasn't meant to feature in the exercises, other reports suggest organisers had intended to land there but forgot to tell residents.

There's some consolation for islanders who were worried by the non-invasion, though. Ostnyland reports that coffee brand Gevalia, long marketed as being ideal when faced with "unexpected visitors", has spotted an unlikely marketing opportunity in the news. The company says it will send free packs of coffee to anyone who had "unexpected military guests".

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Firefighters rescue naked man from Iowa business's chimney

May 19, 2016

yahoo.com

CARROLL, Iowa (AP) — Carrie Sapp teased her husband, Brad, about being afraid of ghosts when he said he heard someone whisper "get out of here" while he was sorting cans at his Iowa recycling business. Of course it wasn't a ghost. It was a naked man in the chimney.

Sapp said she was working the next morning at the Carroll Redemption Center when she heard a man yell for help from the chimney. She told the Daily Times Herald (<http://bit.ly/1XBTQEI>) that the man explained, "I was playing hide-and-seek with my cousin. ... Don't call the cops!"

The police were called, as was the fire department, which eventually managed to free the soot-covered, naked man.

Firefighters initially planned to use a rope to pull Jordan Kajewski from the chimney, but eventually opted to hammer a hole in it and pulled him out.

Though naked, the 29-year-old Kajewski had his clothes with him.

"This was definitely a first for the Carroll Fire Department," Fire Chief Greg Schreck said.

Brad Sapp said he knew Kajewski because he'd asked three times in recent weeks for a job at the company in Carroll, which is about 75 miles northwest of Des Moines.

Kajewski was charged with trespassing. Court records didn't list an attorney for him.

Information from: Daily Times Herald.

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Five Frightening Features of L.A.'s Historic (and Possibly Haunted) Griffith Park!

blumhouse.com



Blumhouse.com

Camilla Jackson

April 29, 2016



Image Credit: Serouj/Wikimedia Commons

Among Angelenos and tourists alike, L.A.'s famous Griffith Park is one of the standout attractions the city has to offer. Apart from being the location for a plethora of classic films (such as *ARMY OF DARKNESS*, *INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS*, and many more), the spectacular views and parkland-adorned walking trails make it difficult to imagine that there is something incredibly sinister that lies beyond the glistening vistas of the City of Angels.

Civilians have been warned many times to avoid the park after dusk, as there may be more than just a few innocent possums hiding among the terrain, but we dug a little deeper to reveal to you five macabre tidbits that the tourist pamphlets will most likely not reveal...



Griffith_03

1. The Griffith Curse

The park is rumored to be plagued by a deadly curse — perhaps a foreshadowing for the ongoing feast of gruesome happenings? As legend would have it, original land-owner Don Antonio Feliz was paid a visit on his deathbed by a local politician to aid Feliz in drawing up his will. Apparently, the politician stuck a stick to the ailing Feliz's head and forced his nodded approval to sway the will in favor of leaving the land to the nefarious

politician. This obviously outraged the Feliz family, and one niece is believed to have said "The wrath of heaven and the vengeance of hell shall fall upon this place."

For the next thirty years, the park changed owners at an incredible frequency, with each new owner meeting a grisly fate. From then on, the park has continued to host all manner of gruesome incidents. One could say this is purely myth... but the events that have happened over the last 150 years make one wonder.

2. Freak Accidents

Griffith is home to more than its fair share of freak accidents — one of note involve a young couple who

met a dastardly ending in 1976. When the amorous duo decided to “sow their wild oats” on a picnic table, a tree fell on them, crushing their virile and heaving bodies. To this day, there are reports of sightings of the couples' apparitions, accompanied by moaning sounds in the exact location of the tragedy. Some civilians have even claimed that the fallen tree (yes, it is still there) has shaken its boughs at them, sending them running for the nearby hills.

The list of strangely morbid incidents goes on and on, including the more recent and horrific case of a motorist being hurled out of his car on a nearby road and landing on a sign for the I-5 freeway at the base of Griffith Park. The body remained on the ledge of the sign as firefighters took several hours to remove it.



Image Credit: Junkyardsparkle/Wikimedia Commons

3. Ghostly Apparitions

Griffith Park is home to The Haunted Hayride, which is a wonderful attraction during Halloween season... but for paranormal enthusiasts, the real action occurs in the Park on a regular basis. Over 100 years ago, the original Griffith Park Zoo was opened; it has since been moved to a different location a few miles west. For those in the know, a trek through the park will lead you to the still-standing site of the old Zoo, its original building

still intact, but now with Satanic scribbles adorning the walls. Many have said that it has been home to a number of animal sacrifices, and the ghosts of those animals are frequently sighted in the vicinity.

Another regular ghost in the park is the infamous “Merry-Go-Round Apparition” that is occasionally seen hovering around the vintage ride. Originally built in 1926, the Merry-Go-Round was moved from its San Diego location to Griffith Park in 1937. Many people have witnessed an apparition wandering about the ride aimlessly after dark, including Griffith Park’s honorary Mayor himself, Louis Alvarado.

Another notable specter is the original land owner, Don Antonio Feliz, whose ghostly likeness has been sighted on numerous occasions riding his phantom horse around various areas of the park.

4. Satanic Rituals and Sacrifices

In 2002, the park’s Chief Ranger gave this ominous statement to the *Los Angeles Times*: “Frankly I’m not afraid of any make-believe demons as much as I am of some of the living and breathing human monsters who come here. If you knew even a quarter of the stuff we find within the park’s perimeter you’d never set foot in it again. Animal sacrifices, satanic cults, murders, prostitution... with stuff like that happening on a regular basis it makes a pair of 30-year-old ghosts look like good times.”

It has been reported that various cult members and satanists have been digging up bones for years from cemeteries and using them for their bizarre rituals in various locations of the park. The SPCA has found the mutilated remains of cats and dogs at the scenes of Satanic ceremonies in remote sections of Griffith Park. The animals are usually disemboweled, beheaded or burned. Some cult members have even taken to grave-robbing human remains such as heads, leg bones and other human body parts from mausoleums and cemeteries across Los Angeles, using them to incite black magic.

5. Severed Heads



Image Credit: iStock/stockcam

Many of us know about the shocking case of the "Los Feliz Murder Mansion," which occurred in the parameters of the park, but the area has been host to a plethora of other murders — too many to mention, in fact. But it is the ongoing theme of dismembered heads and skulls being randomly found within the park's boundaries that is incredibly disconcerting.

In 2012, two dog-walkers had the misfortune of discovering a severed head neatly packaged in

a plastic bag. Hands and feet belonging to the same victim were found within a 50-yard radius of the head. As recently as this year, a human skull believed to be several years old was found near the Hollywood sign, making it the second time a loose cranium has been discovered in the area in the last four years.

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It's In The Newspaper So I Guess It's True

Here are five brief, old and weird news stories that appeared in the New York newspapers over a hundred years ago. In many cases I wish there was a follow-up on the story. In most cases there was not. Truth is almost always stranger than fiction.

Kiss May Cause Her Death

Pittsburg, June 27 – In her anxiety to kiss her husband farewell at the Charleroi station, Mrs. Marie Antonio, of California, neglected to take the car window into account to-day and thrust her head through the glass. She is not expected to survive her injuries. – *New York Tribune* – June 28, 1909 page 3

David's Whistle Never Dry**Boy Only Stops When He Sleeps, And Then He Sings, So Now He is In the Insane Pavilion.**

David Dunn's whistle has landed him in the Pavilion for the Insane at Bellevue at last. Now the neighbors at 550 West Forty-fourth Street, where the boy lives, and 610 Ninth Avenue, two blocks to the eastward where his sister lives, sleep once more in peace.

David is fourteen years old and small for his age. According to William C. McGirr, the sister's husband, his whistle has been going almost without a break, day and night for a week. Arguments and persuasion were met only with selections from popular airs, and while David whistled he looked viciously at McGirr's four little children. On Wednesday night McGirr took him to the West Forty-seventh Street Police Station, where they locked him up, but only for a little while, for he still whistled. The police sent him then to the rooms of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, where he whistled all night. Yesterday morning they took him to the Children's Court and he whistled as he stood in line with the rest of the juvenile prisoners. Justice Wyatt upset the order of the cases to send him away just as quickly as McGirr could tell his story.

At the hospital he answered the routine queries with short shrill blats between his puckered lips. He whistled through his bath and once broke from the attendants and ran around the room, still whistling. The folks there wonder how they are going to stand during the week that they will have to keep him for observation. Sometimes his puckered lips relax while he is sleeping, Mr. McGirr said, but during these intervals he generally sings. – *New York Times* – January 23, 1903

Aged Couple Go Together.**Husband Tells His Children Not To Hasten Their Mother's Burial and Dies in a Few Hours**

John Minter and his aged wife, Elizabeth, who died within a few hours of each other at their home, 139 Walton Street, Brooklyn, were laid side by side yesterday in Evergreen Cemetery. The funeral services were conducted by the Rev. D.G. Ditmars, pastor of the Ainslie Street Baptist Church.

Mrs. Minter had been blind for three years and her husband was her constant companion until his eyesight also began to fail him. Mrs. Minter died early Sunday morning. A few hours before her death she made a remark that she could not live much longer, to which her husband replied that he would soon follow her. He died the next day. The coffin containing the body of Minter and another that of his wife stood side by side in the cozy little parlor, which was filled with mourners and friends, while the street in front of the house was filled with people.

When Minter heard of his wife's death he told his children not to be in a hurry to bury their mother, as he was soon to follow her. he was eighty-seven years old and Mrs. Minter was eighty-two years old. They had been husband and wife for sixty-four years. – *New York Times* – July 20, 1900

Refused Gift of Rosary

Because he refused to accept the proffered gift of a rosary, Daniel Durning was dangerously stabbed. Durning had befriended an old man named Peter Daley who called on him at Harrison's leather factory in Newark, N.J. and offered him the rosary to show his appreciation of Durning's kindness. – *New York Evening World* – August 5, 1902

A Queer Drink That A Man Found In Providence

There are more things in our food and drink than we have realized, but new points are coming to light every day. The gasoline cocktail is the latest thing in the line of beverages, according to the statement of a Providence man who stopped at one of the clubhouses on the bay shore while on an automobile ride a few days ago. Feeling the need of refreshment, he ordered a cocktail which was promptly set before him. He took one sip of the concoction and decided that it was queer. It was bad: it tasted so very bad, in fact, that he was curious and he went to the buffet to seek a personal explanation from the mixer. "What's the matter with it?" he demanded. The barkeeper took a taste and made a wry face.

"Yes that's pretty bad," he admitted rather shamefacedly. "It must be the gasoline. You see, we mix the cocktails early in the day and they're apt to lose their freshness after a few hours. A drop or two of gasoline tones them up first rate. Guess I got a little too much of the juice in this time. I'm sorry. Let me mix you a fresh one." – *Brooklyn Eagle* (via *Providence Journal*) – July 28, 1906

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Yabba-Dabba-Don't: Fred Flintstone Just Got a Parking Ticket nbcnews.com

May 27 2016, 8:06 am ET

by Alexander Smith and Ali Gostanian

Fred Flintstone just narrowly avoided getting his ride towed.



Image: Flintstones parking

A vehicle resembling the "Flintstones" so-called "footmobile" is given a parking ticket in Key West, Florida. City of Key West

Officials in Key West, Florida, appealed for information Thursday after a vehicle resembling the stone-age family's "footmobile" was found parked illegally on the street.

The very-vintage-vehicle was slapped with a ticket, but the City of Key West said on its Facebook page that it "would really like to find the owner before we have to take it away."

Before the ancient auto was sent to the impound, however, the city proclaimed that "the owner has been located!"

It added: "Thanks to everyone who helped on this! And thanks for all the funny remarks. This island is awesome!"

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Forged letters mislead Utah residents about Native American land proposal

Griselda Nevarez

Sunday 5 June 2016 Last modified on Monday 6 June 2016

theguardian.com

Interior secretary did not say land would 'revert' to US government, officials say, as flyers reject Navajos from 'party' for proposed Bears Ears national monument



Overlook Ruin at the proposed Bears Ears national monument in Utah. Photograph: Josh Ewing Crane
Petroglyph, at the proposed Bears Ears national monument in Utah. Photograph: Josh Ewing
A flyer advertising a party with Barack Obama and Sally Jewell for everyone 'except Utah Navajos'. Photograph: Utah Diné Bikéyah
Map of the at the proposed Bears Ears national monument in Utah. Photograph: Handout

Forged letters and flyers appearing at gas stations and post offices in tribal lands in Utah are spreading false information about a proposal to create a national monument that protects Native American land.

The proposed Bears Ears national monument, named for the Bears Ears Buttes in south-eastern Utah, would cover up to 1.9m acres of land that is culturally significant to Native American tribes. The land is considered sacred to tribe members, and it contains more than 100,000 archaeological sites and structures.

Supporters of the monument say the fake documents are an attempt to misinform Native Americans and undermine efforts to safeguard the

land. Posted on bulletin boards, the documents include a fake letter from Sally Jewell, the interior secretary, stating that about 4m acres of the Navajo reservation will "revert" to the federal government.

In response to an enquiry from the Guardian, a spokesman for the Department of the Interior said the letter stating that 4 million acres of the Navajo reservation will "revert" to the federal government was "inauthentic."

"This was not sent out from the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs or from the US Department of Interior. President Obama has no intentions of reducing the size of the Navajo Reservation."

The false documents also include a flyer announcing that Jewell and Barack Obama will travel to the area in July to attend a party celebrating the designation, but that "no Utah Navajos are invited" to attend.

Cynthia Wilson, community outreach coordinator for Utah Diné Bikéyah, a not-for-profit group working to conserve lands significant to Native Americans, said the documents were "very misleading". She said she worried people would "get the wrong idea of what the Bears Ears national monument designation would do".

Wilson first noticed one of the documents when she stopped at a gas station in the town of

1d ago

Im going to just take a stab in the dark here . These false documents and misinformation is coming from a Conservative think tank bent on reducing Tribal lands so they can be exploited for Oil and Gas just a guessThe interested party is using reverse psychology to get the Utha State government active on the issue and they being the Conservatives that they are passing laws to make these land available for other uses already .. So you see exploitation is the end result and the misinformation put out there sparked the results intended .. This has NOTHING to do with the Native Americans ..No no no this is the age old story of the Greedy lying White Man Nothing New here just another Tactic to screw America's Native Population

• Matthew Kilby

1d ago

This is all very bizarre. Especially if you have any sort of knowledge in how public lands get their different designations, or if you know anything about this area of the country.

• sirfotherington

1d ago

What is it about the right wing and lying? I mean, seriously, I WANT to believe that most conservatives are, at heart, decent people. People I just don't agree with on many issues.

But, when they use tactics like this to trick people, it means they know the truth would be too popular. At that point, not only are they lying, but they're lying to prevent a policy that they know is popular and has broad support. That's pretty sinister.

Or, how about when they deliberately lie about things like climate change... knowing full well that the result of doing nothing would be dreadful.

When the left lies it is usually to protect an individual, think Hillary over... well, most things. The right lies to deliberately trick people into supporting policies that would harm them.

• RainsLee sirfotherington

1d ago

This comment was removed by a moderator because it didn't abide by our community standards. Replies may also be deleted. For more detail see our FAQs.

• RainsLee sirfotherington

1d ago

What is it about the left wing and lying? George Orwell's dystopias are about misinformation being forced upon people by **leftist** regimes. And Orwell himself was a socialist.

- Timothy Everton RainsLee
1d ago

The difference seems to be between true-life and fiction novel

- Helen2Wheels
2d ago

Someone is trying a back door maneuver to pave the way to profit off extraction of now-protected land. Face it, extractive industries are going to exhaust supplies on currently available lands and if they want to continue to reap their massive profits, they're going to need access to now protected areas with great value for natural or cultural resources. I read about how my Congress-Critter votes in the Sunday papers and she's voted for, among other things, to remove barriers to drilling for fossil fuels on tribal lands and fast-track mining permits. But THIS is the new freedumb: unrestrained capitalism. (Those who extol this never bother to mention what happens when other good things go unrestrained, such as over eating or way too much beer). But, she got into office by terrifying her constituents with an "imminent invasion of teenage Central American ISIS members ready to swarm across the border and give us all ebola." And between the fact that she's a great schmoozer, former female fighter pilot and the GOP is pouring tons of money into her eRection coffers, I'm afraid I'm stuck with her.

- Timothy Everton Helen2Wheels
1d ago

If your "Congress-Critter" is voting against the will of those who elected said person, then see that (s)he is defeated for re-election. It takes hard work, but can be done.

- Iostinbago Timothy Everton
10h ago

It's not the will of the people any more and hasn't been since big money and dark money took over the elections. McSally lost in 2012 when she only spent 1.4 million about the same as her opponent. However, in 2014, monied interests gave her almost 5 million to buy the election and she won. Views and positions and the people's will matter less and less as the plutocrats control the elections now for candidates of both parties.

- Helen2Wheels Iostinbago
9h ago

Yeah, and she "won" by 167 votes out of about 200.000 cast. The rest of us lost, including the saps who believed the crap they were sold by the fear machine. She's doing a great job being charismatic in public even as she does an exemplary job for her sponsors in secret voting sessions in Congress.

- RandomLibertarian

2d ago

Anyone who would be fooled by that flyer is too damn stupid to vote anyway.

- Matthew Kilby RandomLibertarian

1d ago

You know nothing about this area of the country to say something like that. Often the only communication people have is old fashioned radio. No real phone or internet system. People, whether white or Indian or other, often don't really interact with the outside world often at all, and could very well believe something looking as unofficial as this letter. Especially when word can spread quickly mouth to mouth without any real check on its validity. Furthermore, solder people only speak Ute or Navajo, for example. Anything on a piece of paper can look official in this part of the US. Way to make sweeping judgments, though.

- Katime RandomLibertarian

1d ago

You're being regrettably patronizing. I suspect you'd be even more easily fooled at voting time. Are you a Trump supporter, by chance?

- Veraneio RandomLibertarian

1d ago

I bet you're registered to vote, which refutes your claim.

- jpsartreny

2d ago

The Natives need to be given credit for tying outwit the White man using his own strategy : paper and meaningless printed words it took about 400 years but its a good start. Muhammad Ali : "I ain't draft dodging. I ain't burning no flag. I ain't running to Canada. I'm staying right here. You want to send me to jail? Fine, you go right ahead. I've been in jail for 400 years. I could be there for 4 or 5 more, but I ain't going no 10,000 miles to help murder and kill other poor people. If I want to die, I'll die right here, right now, fightin' you, if I want to die. You my enemy, not no Chinese, no Vietcong, no Japanese. You my opposer when I want freedom. You my opposer when I want justice. You my opposer when I want equality. Want me to go somewhere and fight for you? You won't even stand up for me right here in America, for my rights and my religious beliefs. You won't even stand up for my rights here at home."

- desertrat49 jpsartreny

2d ago

This act is right out of the very best passive/aggressive white male terror, threats and harassment practice on women and minorities over the past 400 years or so

in North America to establish and maintain Euro/American dominance! The tradition and its examples are far too numerous to mention....but jpsartreny gets the picture! In response to this outrage...Obama should declare the Bears Ears NM immediately with an explicit connection to the abuse of our Native Americans/First Nations!....Native Americans need to flood the White House switchboard!....enough with the lies, abuse and intimidation of The Tribes! The Bears Ears can become the symbol of a new assertiveness by the First Nations!

• Katime jpsartreny
1d ago

I can see that you're well meaning but Native Americans did have writing. The claim that they didn't is false. As an example look to the hundred thousands (or is it millions?) of manuscripts burned by the Spanish in South America. But there are also many examples of old North American native folks and their mode of writing. Please look it up.

• scoff0165 Katime
1d ago

From Wikipedia:

The Dresden Codex, also known as the Codex Dresdensis, is a pre-Columbian Maya book of the eleventh or twelfth century of the Yucatecan Maya in Chichén Itzá.[1] This Maya codex is believed to be a copy of an original text of some three or four hundred years earlier. [2] It is the oldest book written in the Americas known to historians.[3] Of the hundreds of books that were used in Mesoamerica before the Spanish conquest, it is one of only 15 that have survived to the present day.[4]

Dresden Codex

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Mexican Hat and saw a flyer posted on a bulletin board. She suspected there could be more, so she drove to the nearest post office, in the town of Bluff, and saw more posted with printouts that people could take with them.

"At this time, I have no idea who made up those false documents," Wilson said.



Crane Petroglyph, at the proposed Bears Ears national monument in Utah. Photograph: Josh Ewing A flyer advertising a party with Barack Obama and Sally Jewell for everyone 'except Utah Navajos'. Photograph: Utah Diné Bikéyah Map of the at the proposed Bears Ears national monument in Utah. Photograph: Handout

Jesse Prentice-Dunn, advocacy director for the Center for Western Priorities, said the documents "certainly show disrespect" toward the tribal leaders who are pushing for the national monument. But he said he was not surprised, given how much opposition was coming from the Utah legislature and how contentious the debate over the monument had become.

Last month, Utah lawmakers passed a resolution that opposes the proposed designation. They say they are afraid the protection would curtail the use of the land and that the region already has three monuments.

Some also argue that environmental groups, not tribal members, are the interests at work. As a result, a state panel recently asked the governor and the state attorney general to investigate organizations that are advocating for the monument. Governor Gary Herbert has signed a resolution opposing the monument.

Wilson said there was "strong support" for the monument among tribal members and pointed out that six of the seven Navajo chapter houses in Utah had passed resolutions supporting it. "It's just that a lot of things, like these flyers posted, try to confuse people," she said.

The proposal for the monument was presented last year by the Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition, which is made up of five local tribes: the Hopi tribe, Navajo nation, Ute Mountain Ute tribe, Pueblo of Zuni and Ute Indian tribe.



Crane Petroglyph, at the proposed

The proposal urges Obama to use the authority he has under the Antiquities Act, which allows the president to unilaterally designate national monuments.

Gavin Noyes, executive director of the Utah Diné Bikéyah, called the proposal "historic". He said he's not aware of another time when Native American tribes have come together for such a petition.

"This is the first time that's happened," he said. "And it's also probably the first time that this broad of a coalition of tribes has come together and united around a big issue such as this one. We've not seen that before."

Bears Ears national monument in Utah. Photograph: Josh Ewing A flyer advertising a party with Barack Obama and Sally Jewell for everyone 'except Utah Navajos'. Photograph: Utah Diné Bikéyah Map of the at the proposed Bears Ears national monument in Utah. Photograph: Handout

Noyes added that he worried many tribal members might be influenced by the false documents. He said he wanted to assure them that the national monument would not limit their use of the land. He said they would still be able to collect medicinal herbs, collect wood for ceremonial uses, hunt and visit sacred places.

Furthermore, Noyes said creating the monument would protect and preserve the land, which he said was threatened by rampant looting. He noted that grave sites were being dug up and the artifacts taken from them sold for pennies on the black market.



Crane Petroglyph, at the proposed Bears Ears national monument in Utah. Photograph: Josh Ewing A flyer advertising a party with Barack Obama and Sally Jewell for everyone 'except Utah Navajos'. Photograph: Utah Diné Bikéyah Map of the at the proposed Bears Ears national monument in Utah. Photograph: Handout

Jewell has so far remained quiet on whether the president will designate a new national monument this year.

In an April speech, Jewell announced that her cross-country trip this summer would include a stop in Utah, where she said there were "a range of conservation proposals – legislative and otherwise – to further protect public lands". She did not mention the Bears Ears national monument proposal, but supporters say they remain hopeful.

Asked if Jewell would address the Bears Ears proposal, the Department of Interior spokesperson said: "The secretary of the interior is still committed to placing 500,000 acres of land into trust nationwide by the end of President Obama's term."

- This piece was amended on 7 June 2016, to include responses from a Department of Interior spokesperson.

comments

- jhvance
6h ago

The land transfer coterie pushes a demagogic platform in claiming that states could "better" manage what are now Federal lands, but deliberately fails to acknowledge that their preferred form of "management" involves monetization for short-term capital gain -- windfalls that would quickly be frittered away by cash-hungry Legislative budget demands -- through sale or re-transfer to private sector interests. It's a strategy built around two principles: 1) PT Barnum's "There's a sucker born every minute." and 2) Goebbels' "The Big Lie".

- Jan Niles

8h ago

And here in Utah, we have a Governor Herbert, who is drooling over public lands that can be sold for mining, fracking, development, et al. The tourists think more of our land here than the politicians who have obligations to repay campaign contributors, and even though we have five National Parks that bring in large revenue for the state and business owners, there is bitterness in the legislature, that this land cannot be exploited. Our Paiutes here were robbed long ago of their valuable land, and now live in squalor and nobody cares.

- Iostinbago

10h ago

The natural resources corporate mining interests owned by the 1% have a history of planting false information to stir up opposition to National Parks and other other areas protected from their stealing of resources that really belong to all of us for their own private fortunes. It's been going on for a long time starting with laws that allowed privatization of resources under one's own land that can be 'taken' by lateral mining under private property. These were laws created by purchased congressmen indebted to their 1% donors.

- MayorHoberMallow

1d ago

That first picture of Overlook Ruin in gorgeous.

- Richard Baker

1d ago

The last place I would have take tribe land is the maggots white man government.

- newbieeverydayRichard Baker

23h ago

Can you read? No tribal land is being taken.

- panpipes

1d ago

Mormons.....

- LukeHenkel

1d ago

Sad... For a time I thought that the dirty treaties of the US stopped in the 19th century. Clearly I was wrong. Credit must be given to the Guardian for exposing it though. We didn't have that back then, so I guess there's hope.

- kgb999again LukeHenkel
10h ago

Wow. You didn't actually read one bit of the article, did you?

- Nevergoback
1d ago

Didn't something similar happen on a college campus and it turned out the activist who made all the noise was responsible? Might be true here.

- dolfhi
1d ago

The Navajos need to understand the power of borrowed money

- majamer
1d ago

Let's not forget that America was occupied by force, and this is what happens in an occupation. Also, the concept of public land is made up by those occupiers who had the chance to stick their stakes wherever they wanted just because they the first/strongest to get there. People get so angry about ISIS or the Syrian regime looting Syrian relics, but they forget that there's a terrorist in every human being including Christopher Columbus, the first American terrorist.

- ExcaliburDefendermajamer
1d ago

Had the Americans of 1492 had partial smallpox immunity, things would look very very different today. True to of Mexico and the war on drugs, we cannot know what their potential could have been.

:<(. . . .

- kgb999again majamer
10h ago

Yes. America was occupied by force. Starting with the very first tribes who trickled in and with every subsequent emergence of a new population on the continent. This is literally the history of the the entire world. Occupiers prior to Columbus were different only in the level of technology they were able to wield in conflict.

Practically speaking, every bit of land on this hemisphere had already been fought over and occupied many times over by any number of entities that used bloody force and flat-out genocide to secure various regional resources for their own - long before Europeans showed up to join in the game. The fact that early natives used different administrative conceptual constructs doesn't change the

documented bloody domination manifest between the various tribes who first occupied America by force.

Any definition of a "Native People" all boils down to when you decide to start counting. The original occupier would be whatever inhabitant picked up a weapon and said "this is mine now ... get out." That inhabitant certainly wasn't Christopher Columbus. Hell, if we're being honest, Columbus wasn't even particularly abusive if you contrast his administration with how native civilizations are documented to have behaved towards the peoples they conquered.

Violence defined the world long before white people came along. White people certainly didn't invent the game. And I'll go one further. White people certainly don't get nearly enough credit for ultimately creating a society responsible for advancing the concept that occupation by force is wrong in the first place. There is zero evidence that at any time was Pre-Colombian America held together by some kind overarching agreement among inhabitants to eschew force in the competition for resources. That never happened. Ever.

Do we in modern society fall short of our stated ideals ALL THE FUCKING TIME? Of course we do. But, truth be told ... as far as genocide and cultural domination goes, we hold up to the ideals the Aztec people just damn fine. Let's be real here.

- SidneyParade
1d ago

In my brothers mostly black neighbourhood in Philadelphia in November 2008, flyers were sent around looking like official govt notices, exclaiming that due to the massive interest in the upcoming presidential election, polling stations were to remain open on Wednesday to accommodate demand.

- NYbill13
1d ago

From the comments I infer that this false flyer may be an effort to open Native American lands to commercial exploitation. The article isn't at all clear on that.

If this is in fact some kind of attempt to further commercial interests, it's sort of what we expect from 'conservatives,' which is to say those who profit.

A few years back, a candidate for a seat in the NY State Senate circulated mailers falsely claiming that an Assistant FBI Director supported his candidacy. The mailer, which was sent by mail to thousands of voters, prominently quoted this FBI person.

In fact no such person existed, and the FBI said its policy strictly forbids political endorsements.

Of course no action was taken against the GOP candidate, other than his opponent pointing out the fraud. One or two local papers regretted the colossal lie.

But plenty of voters believed it, and the Republican sailed to victory. True, he had to resign a few years later when his spending attracted investigation, but I'm sure he's still very active in politics, especially the dirty sort.

One thing neocons have learned: If you lie big, loudly and often, you win.

- PamelaKatz NYbill13
1d ago

The Utah legislature wants the lands open to mining. The Native tribes do not. The land is vast and remote. Much of the theft and desecration of Zuni, Hopi and Navajo religious and burial sites (artifacts that have been increasingly finding their way to auctions in France) occurs in this area. By making it a National monument, it adds Federal legal protection. Although the area is rich in natural minerals, the only way to profitably extract is by strip mining, which is what the legislature is keen on promoting.

- DanInTheDesert
1d ago

I remember in Michigan in 2004 there were flyers distributed in the black parts of town that were full of misinformation. They gave the wrong date for the election and the reader was told that if they missed the first election day their vote would still count if it was cast the next day.

I suspected Karl Rove then and I now I suspect a graduate of the Karl Rove school of dirty tricks.

(which is till a better school than Trump University)

- sour_mash DanInTheDesert
1d ago

If it's oil and gas I suspect the Koch Brothers. I've not heard of any move on their part into water on a similar scale - yet.

- lostinbago sour_mash
10h ago

T Boone Pickens and other billionaires have bought a lot of land sitting over the largest aquifer in the US, Ogalala. They have the right to drain unlimited amounts of water from their personal wells which will drain the levels throughout 7 states. This is thanks to the laws created by state legislators who received massive donations from self same billionaires.

- alastriona
1d ago

The looted graves contents will no doubt be for sale in a Paris auction

- ExcaliburDefender

1d ago

All the problems we face in the United States today can be traced to an unenlightened immigration policy on the part of the American Indian.

- Pat Paulsen

And now we have Trumpity Dumpity, please vote.

Peace, justice, and a habitable planet. -|-

- Colin Wright ExcaliburDefender

1d ago

'All the problems we face in the United States today can be traced to an unenlightened immigration policy on the part of the American Indian.'

I was under the impression that freely admitting immigrants was considered enlightened.

- ExcaliburDefender Colin Wright

1d ago

The Spanish brought horses and smallpox, not a happy ending, actually.

Peace. -|-

- Iostinbago ExcaliburDefender

10h ago

And a non native animal, pigs. The spanish gave us bacon and ham and cracklings and clogged arteries.

- newbieeveryday

1d ago

More dirty tricks from the corporate-backed Sagebrush Rebellion. "We don't hold with coddling those heathens. Give us our land!"

- Spion60 newbieeveryday

1d ago

I don't think the villain in this case is corporate interests. There is a rivalry between environmentalists and the tribes. It exists in other places as well.

- Eric Jacobson

1d ago

This is nothing more than the decades long attempt at land grabbing by the Mormon church and its legislature for the gas and oil companies. If nothing else they (utah govt.) will try and sell it to highest bidder and close it to the public forever. This is already BLM land and a presidential order making it a monument only adds some more conditions so it will stay the same without trashing it for small time gain.

• babymamaboy

1d ago

"Everyone is invited except Utah Navajos."

Amateur forgery.

• sour_mash babymamaboy

1d ago

Koch Brothers should have spent more?

• guylaroche sour_mash

1d ago

You must check under your bed for Koch Brother every night.

• Spion60 sour_mash

1d ago

Nope. Environmentalists.

• imipak

1d ago

Utah is one of the States petroglyphs and other ancient rock art is being destroyed. The two sets of events seem to have a common objective, erasure of native Americans, their land, their culture, everything. As if they had never existed.

They needn't be coordinated, you only have to have a religious sect or a corporation that convinces the youth that this is how it should be and much of the damage will be done without any further coordination or assistance.

However, it is fairly clear that erasure is the ultimate objective, no matter how many different groups have independently decided on that objective.

How to combat such attitudes, given the Constitution protects extremism but not heritage or treaties, is a challenge America will eventually have to face up to lest it devour itself.

• Eric Moller

Greek archaeologist claims he's found tomb of Aristotle

AP May 26, 2016, 3:44 PM

cbsnews.com

CBSNews.com - Breaking News



"Aristotle with a Bust of Homer," a 1653 piece by Rembrandt van Rijn.

THESSALONIKI, Greece -- A Greek archaeologist who excavated the birthplace of Aristotle in northern Greece in the 1990s says a destroyed structure he discovered may have been the tomb of the ancient philosopher and teacher of Alexander the

Great.

Konstantinos Sismanidis concedes that he has "no proof but just strong indications" to back up his theory, presented Thursday at a conference marking the 2,400th anniversary of the philosopher's birth.

Aristotle (384-322 B.C.) was a pupil of Plato and one of history's most influential thinkers.

Sismanidis said the structure unearthed in the ruins of Stageira, 43 miles east of Thessaloniki, was once a public monument where Aristotle was honored after his death. No human remains were found there.

Sismanidis also quoted medieval references to Aristotle's ashes being interred in his hometown.

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Friends decided to wear same shirt in their yearbook photo and things snowballed

metro.co.uk

Some friends decided to wear the same shirt in their yearbook picture and things sort of snowballed from there

Alison Lynch for Metro.co.uk Friday 3 Jun 2016 7:35 am



These friends decided to wear the same shirt in their yearbook picture and things sort of snowballed

Hawaiian shirts were huge that year
(Picture: Dave Hasselbee/Imgur)

A group of New York students decided to have a little fun on picture day and then everyone got involved.

Well, you've got to liven things up somehow.

Dave Hasselbee, a junior at Sleepy Hollow High School in Westchester, New York, started off with five matching Hawaiian shirts and persuaded his mates to put them on for their pictures.

, explaining: 'A few friends and I decided to have some fun on picture day. We bought five shirts and about 10 kids knew about it before picture day.'



pic 1

(Picture: Dave Hasselbee/Imgur)

But, then, as he went on to explain, things sort of snowballed.



(Picture: Dave Hasselbee/Imgur)

Pic 2

Hasselbee/Imgur)

The teenagers waited outside the classroom where the photo shoot was taking place and just asked the next person in if they wanted to wear the shirt.

'We got about 50 kids in the end,' Dave wrote.



Pic 3

(Picture: Dave Hasselbee/Imgur)

We like how everyone put their own spin on it – some left it open over a tee; others went for buttoned up. So versatile.



Pic 4

(Picture: Dave Hasselbee/Imgur)

And then the teachers got involved.



teachers 1

(Picture: Dave Hasselbee/Imgur)

Dave said they were a little harder to persuade, but once the chair of the science department got involved, the floodgates opened.



teachers 2

(Picture: Dave Hasselbee/Imgur)

One lady really went for it.

(Picture: Dave Hasselbee/Imgur)

The students were delighted when they received their printed yearbooks.

Oh, and if you're wondering where to get yourself one of those jazzy Hawaiian print shirts, don't worry, Dave's provided a link to the website



We hope he got a discount.

Now imagine if these kids actually put their creative skills to practical use.

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The 1904 General Slocum Disaster Had Survivors That Lived Into The 21st Century

stuffnobodycaresabout.com

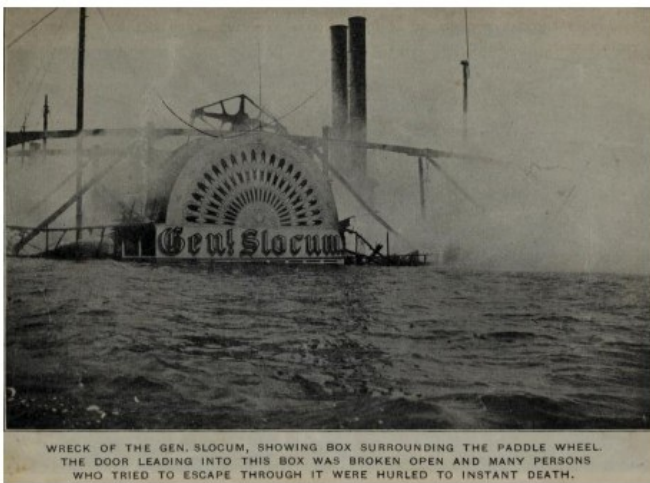
Stuff Nobody Cares About

A not so random collection of observations about things you should care about



Catherine Connelly & Adella Wotherspoon, General Slocum Survivors, Lived To Ages 109 & 100

The Story of The General Slocum Steamship Disaster



WRECK OF THE GEN. SLOCUM, SHOWING BOX SURROUNDING THE PADDLE WHEEL. THE DOOR LEADING INTO THIS BOX WAS BROKEN OPEN AND MANY PERSONS WHO TRIED TO ESCAPE THROUGH IT WERE HURLED TO INSTANT DEATH.

General Slocum Disaster

June 15, 2014 marks the 110th anniversary of what had been New York's biggest disaster and loss of life until the September 11 attacks occurred. We think it is worth remembering the ill-fated General Slocum steamship fire. Here is the story of the General Slocum and a brief summary of the lives of the last two survivors of the disaster who amazingly lived into the 21st century.

A Beautiful Day For A Picnic

"Kleindeutschland," as the area of Little Germany was called on the lower east side, was bounded approximately by the East River and Third Avenue and stretched from Houston Street to about 23rd Street. It was a working class, close-

knit community of laborers and business owners. The German families that lived in this neighborhood made Tompkins Square Park their center for congregating and relaxation. But for special occasions they would embark on a trip to get out of the city.

Wednesday, June 15, 1904 was a sunny day and the members of the Sunday School of St. Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church at 323 E. 6th Street were looking forward to a day filled with games, music and a large picnic for their 17th annual excursion to bucolic Locust Grove, Long Island.

To get there, the church had chartered a steamship built in 1891, the three decked white paddle-wheeler, General Slocum.

Sudden Disaster

The General Slocum was filled with around 1,400 passengers, mostly women and children as the men generally had to work on a weekday. The Slocum headed out from its berth at 3rd Street on the East River at about 9:30 am with a band playing and the passengers joyously celebrating the smooth ride and beautiful weather.

Thirty minutes after setting out, the ship caught fire (how the fire started was never precisely determined) at around 90th street as it neared Hell Gate. When thirteen-year-old passenger Frank Prawdziski ran to the pilot's house and informed Captain, William van Schaick that the ship was on fire, the Captain



New York Tribune June 16, 1904 (click to enlarge)

replied, "Shut up and mind your own business."

Minutes later, Captain van Schaick realized the ship was indeed on fire and made the mistake of trying to beach the vessel on North Brother Island opposite 145th Street of the Bronx coastline, rather than go for closer shores. As the Captain accelerated his speed against a headwind, the flames were fanned and the fire spread quickly. No alarm or signal was given to the passengers that the ship was on fire. When passengers discovered the quick spreading fire, they became frantic in an effort to escape the flames.

Unlike the Titanic which sank eight years later, where the crew was organized and disciplined in evacuating the ship, most of the Slocum crew of 36 men pushed passengers out of the way and abandoned ship. The crew had never been trained in a fire drill and the few lifeboats on board were never lowered – they were wired down.

The panicked passengers were left to fend for themselves. The life preservers were strapped to the ceiling of the ship's deck and were out of reach of many of the women and children. Those who could grab a life preserver had a nasty surprise waiting for them.

The Slocum and its life preservers had "passed inspection" only weeks before, without ever actually being checked. In reality the life preservers were rotten – filled with dried, pulverized cork.

When some passengers tried putting them on, they disintegrated in their hands. Others who managed to jump into the water wearing the "good" life preservers, sank like a boulder was weighted around them.

Not only was the pulverized cork filling of the life preservers water logged without an iota of buoyancy, it seems some of the life preservers had metal weights added to them to bring their weight specifications up to standards. Fire hoses of the cheapest kind were also rotten from age and neglect, ruptured when activated and were rendered useless.



Jumping off the General Slocum

Women who strapped life preservers onto their children and tossed their small loved ones overboard, watched in horror as they disappeared without ever coming back to the surface.

Most of the women and children who jumped into the water without life preservers could not swim. They were also weighed down by the heavy clothes then customarily worn at the turn of the century, and many drowned.

Others who jumped overboard were crushed to death by the huge paddle-wheel of the steamer.

Some of those who could swim were swamped by those who could not, and were desperately clutched at by the drowning masses and dragged down to their watery graves.

One of the decks of the Slocum collapsed sending hundreds of passengers into the bowels of the fiery ship. Many were burnt to death or died of smoke inhalation from the fire.

Surrounding ships in the area and onlookers from shore rushed to the aid of those flailing in the water and pulled out as many survivors as they could.

The Toll



Bodies of General Slocum victims on North Brother Island



The Evening World cover June 15, 1904 (click to enlarge)

In the end according to the *New York Times*, an estimated 1021 people lost their lives and approximately 321 survived.

Since there was no manifest of passengers the final death toll will never be exact, but it was probably more than 1021. The official police report put the number at 1031 and

The Brooklyn Eagle newspaper listed 1204 as dead or missing.

In the neighborhood of Little Germany families were decimated, many losing a mother and two or more children. In some cases entire families were killed. At the Lutheran Cemetery in Middle Village, Queens, over 900 victims were buried, including 61 in a mass grave for the unidentified.

The owners of the General Slocum, The Knickerbocker Steamboat Company escaped jail time for negligence. Knickerbocker President Frank Barnaby was indignant at people wanting to sue him or his company. Knickerbocker filed suit that a limit be fixed to their liability claimed by the plaintiffs as the number of suits grew for loss, damage and injury.



General Slocum victims in temporary morgue 26th Street photo: NYPL

The liability limit they wanted was not to exceed the value of the boat. That is the value of the boat *after the fire* and beaching and termination of the excursion should not exceed the sum of for all the victims collectively — **\$5,000**.

That would amount to less than \$5 paid per fatality and injured.

The owners then had the gall to claim that under maritime law *that sum* should be subject to the fees of the salvage and wreckage services performed. Essentially they were claiming they should be limited to the current value of their wrecked boat which would be close to nothing.

Sure enough, besides a fine they had to pay, Knickerbocker ended up paying nothing to the survivors or the victims families.

Ship safety inspectors Henry Lundberg and John Fleming who had passed the General Slocum despite numerous violations were indicted. Lundberg was tried three separate times for manslaughter but was never convicted.

Captain van Schaick was made the scapegoat for the disaster and was sentenced to prison for ten years, but was pardoned after serving less than four years.

Survivors



General Slocum Burial of Unknown Dead Avenue A 6th Street
June 18, 1904 photo: NYPL



The Evening World Slocum Survivors tell their stories- June 15 1904 (click to enlarge)

The Organization of the General Slocum Survivors was formed soon after the disaster. Those who survived the General Slocum disaster were generally reluctant to talk about their experience even with their families.

Many remaining family members devastated by the deaths of so many loved ones, lived with

sorrowful memories that would not die and committed suicide or went crazy.

Tompkins Square Park has a memorial fountain that commemorates the General Slocum disaster, but the center for grieving and attendance of the memorials was at the Lutheran Cemetery in Middle Village, Queens.

As anniversaries came and went fewer and fewer survivors attended annual memorial commemorations. The public was quick to forget the tragic events with attendance at the memorial event dropping from the thousands to the hundreds and then dozens; mostly relatives and history buffs as they years wore on. By 1957 at the memorial commemoration there were only twenty nine members of the Slocum Survivors Organization, only twelve of whom were aboard the ship. By 1979 the Queens Historical Society had identified there were only 21 Slocum survivors still alive.

The majority of the detailed survivors accounts are contemporary ones from newspapers, magazines and the instant books that were published within weeks of the catastrophe.

It took many years after the disaster for authors such as Irving Werstein in 1965 and Claude Rust in 1981, to re-examine the disaster and write books about the General Slocum.

Weakened by morning sickness, Rust's mother fortuitously stepped off the Slocum just before it departed. Rust was captivated by his mother's story and collected Slocum material over many years and did interview some of the few remaining survivors.

The best overall telling of the General Slocum tragedy is Edward O'Donnell's book *Ship Ablaze: The Tragedy of the Steamboat General Slocum*; 2003, Broadway Books.

And Then There Were Two

Catherine Connelly was born Catherine Uhlmyer April 4, 1893 in Manhattan. Her father died before she was a year old, and her mother married John Gallagher and Catherine took his last name for her own.

According to the *New York Times*, a grocer who belonged to the church gave the Gallaghers, who were Roman Catholics, three tickets. But they needed one more. Mr. Gallagher had to work.

"I went over to the store crying and they gave me a ticket," Mrs. Connelly said. "I was never on a boat before."

She never set foot on one again.



*Catherine Uhlmyer Gallagher Connelly photo
New York Times*

Catherine lost her mother, Veronica, her 9-year-old brother, Walter, and 9-month-old sister, Agnes. Catherine, then 11, escaped by jumping or being lowered to a boat, the name of which she never knew.

"You know you don't fully grasp the meaning of everything," Catherine said of her initial response. There had been a family. But now there was only a motherless child surveying her world. "There were six other deaths just on the block where I lived," she said.

After the disaster Catherine Gallagher first lived with her grandparents, then with an aunt and uncle. She dropped out of school at 13, and at 20 she married Thomas Connelly, a truck driver.

She had all but one of her 11 babies at home, and made her own diapers. Mother's Days meant wall-to-wall flowers in the Manhattan apartment where she lived alone until she was 102. Her pleasures included cooking rich food, and her secret for longevity was a banana a day.

Catherine died October 17, 2002 at the age of 109.



Adella Liebenow Wotherspoon

Adella Wotherspoon was born Adella Liebenow on November 28, 1903 in New York. She was six months old when she escaped the burning ship. When the fire started, Adella was in the arms of her mother Anna. Adella's sister also named Anna, 3, and her sister Helen, 6 were nearby. Her father, Paul, was on another part of the ship. Her mother covered her face, and, with her clothing on fire, jumped into the river.

"My mother was very, very badly burned, all up her left side," Mrs. Wotherspoon said in an interview with *The Journal News*, "so I assumed that she hung on as long as she could and then dropped into the water when she couldn't hang on anymore."

According to the *New York Times*, after helping the two to shore, Mr. Liebenow left to search for his missing daughters. The body of Helen was never found, but he identified little Anna's. By then, he had lost track of his wife and baby.

A year afterward, the youngest survivor of the disaster, Adella, unveiled the monument to the 61 unidentified dead at Lutheran Cemetery in Middle Village, Queens. The toddler dropped her doll as her mother held her up to pull the cord to reveal the sculptures of four figures symbolizing despair, grief, courage and belief in the hereafter.

Adella's father Paul was also badly burned, contracted pneumonia after the fire and never mentally recovered from the loss of two of his daughters, two sisters, two nieces and a nephew who were also aboard the ship. Despite his fragile health he went back to work and lived another five years dying at the age of 38 on January 30, 1910.

Adella, the last survivor of the General Slocum disaster, died January 26, 2004 at the age of 100.

4 thoughts on "The 1904 General Slocum Disaster Had Survivors That Lived Into The 21st Century"

1. Don Reed January 1, 2016 at 11:52 pm

Excellent site; thank you.

Suggestion:

"Rust's mother fortuitously stepped off the Slocum just before it departed due to morning sickness."

The ship did not depart (sail away) due to morning sickness.

Recommended change to:

"Weakened by morning sickness, Rust's mother fortuitously stepped off the Slocum just before it departed."

2. Sara February 10, 2016 at 11:20 pm

Hey Don, nobody asked for your grammar nazi services. So why don't you keep them to yourself. I had no trouble understanding that sentence or any other. It was a great, but heartbreaking story. Thanks.

1. helmut February 19, 2016 at 1:36 am

the Internet , alas, has the effect of drawing many fools, such as Sara, from their obscurity.

3. Jewel March 13, 2016 at 12:04 am

Just one of so many terrible things that happen to people! They are resting in the creator's memory awaiting the resurrection. John 5:28, 29 Rev 21:3, 4

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German churches to get wi-fi 'Godspots' - BBC News

bbc.com



By News from Elsewhere... ...as found by BBC Monitoring

■ 19 May 2016

Worshippers at Protestant churches in central Germany will soon be able to access the internet via free wi-fi hotspots - billed as "Godspots" by the church.

Wi-fi is being installed at 220 churches across the Berlin and Brandenburg region, with plans to expand coverage to all 3,000 churches in the region, the RBB broadcaster reports. Among the first to get connected will be Berlin's French Cathedral on the central Gendarmenmarkt square, and the city's iconic Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church.

People will be able to access the "Godspots" both inside and outside, and the church is promising a secure network with no advertising. Users will first be greeted by a home page with information about the building, community and faith-related material, but then they'll be free to browse the wider web.

"People are no less spiritual than before, but the places of communication have shifted and much takes place on digital social networks and communities," Fabian Kraetschmer, the church's IT manager, says on the service's website. "With Godspot, we at the Evangelical Church want to create a safe and familiar home in the digital world."

While church wi-fi might seem unusual, visitors to Moscow can get a similar service in the city's most-visited cemeteries. Announced in December, the graveside wi-fi was apparently prompted by a survey in which respondents complained about a lack of internet access in cemeteries.

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Can you spot a GHOST on horseback in this eerie snap?

11:10, 5 Jan 2016 Updated 11:29, 5 Jan 2016 By Ed Chatterton

mirror.co.uk

Is this a GHOST on horseback in an English graveyard?

Richard Durham, 45, took the eerie snap on New Year's day in Daventry



SWNS

Eerie: Can you spot the spooky figure in this picture?

An amateur photographer believes he has unwittingly captured a spooky picture of a GHOST on horseback in a graveyard.

Richard Durham, 45, took the eerie snap as he went for a walk with his new camera on New Year's Day.

The dad-of-three stopped by Weedon Bec cemetery in Daventry, Northants,

and photographed the frosty scene at around 9am.

But when he returned home and uploaded it to Facebook an eagle-eyed pal pointed out the ghostly image lurking behind a row of headstones.

Since then the gardener has been contacted by dozens of spooked web users who believe they can also see the chilling outline of a hooded figure and a horse.



SWNS

Spooky: Richard thinks he can see a spirit on horseback

Yesterday Richard, from Boothville, Northants, said: "The weird thing is, one friend told me her three-year-old daughter always acts quite strange around that area.

"She stops and holds out her hand like she is stroking a horse. Another friend told me her child did exactly the same.

"I do believe in ghosts but never thought I would ever capture one on camera.

"All I was doing was trying to get a few nice weather shots on a frosty and misty morning. It is quite an old village so probably has a few stories to tell.

"Locals have been telling me the pub down the road is haunted by a horseman.

"Apparently he used to walk there from the main church though the graveyard and up along the canal.

"So maybe this is him."

When Richard first uploaded the picture, which he took with a Nikon D5300, it was his friend Heather Burton who spotted the ghost.



SWNS

Hooded figure: Richard says other people have also experienced spooky events in the church yard

Richard, a volunteer fundraiser for the Warwickshire and Northamptonshire Air Ambulance, added: "I got a message from my ambulance colleague saying there's a ghost on your photo.

"I didn't believe her at first as I couldn't see it for ages, but then I spotted it and thought 'wow'.

"It's hard to spot to begin with but once you spot it you can really see it.

"To me it looks like he is holding something and looking down at a grave, like he might be laying flowers.

"Also you can just make out a horse to his left. It's pretty freaky to say the least.

"Some people have told me I've been having one too many sherbets, but I think there's definitely something there."

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GHOST or MURDER? Creepy 'photo of human corpse' on NEW iPhone goes viral

express.co.uk


EXPRESS

Home of the Daily and Sunday Express
express_logo

A MACABRE mystery centring around a disturbing photograph found on a BRAND NEW iPhone has gone viral.

By Jon Austin Jon Austin

PUBLISHED: 11:10, Wed, May 25, 2016 | UPDATED:

11:50, Wed, May 25, 2016

More than three million people have viewed a video uploaded to YouTube, which claims the buyer of the new phone had not used it or taken any pictures when he spotted the thumbnail of the image.

Viewers have suggested it could have got there by paranormal means, and be anything from a ghost which has possessed the phone, to an extraterrestrial or a scene from an alien abduction.

But, perhaps more sinisterly, others have suggested it could be an actual photograph of an, as yet, unknown murder victim.

The footage shows the smartphone with a picture of what could be a woman's face on the camera roll, with apparent bruises around her eyes and looking like she is either asleep, unconscious or dead.



YouTube

The new owner is mystified as to why any picture would be on a brand-new phone, let alone something so disturbing.

He also said it would not open when he tried to click on it, indicating there had been an attempt to delete the original.

YouTube prolific poster Julian Calavero shared the story before it went viral.

According to the account, staff at the shop where it was bought were too afraid to help with the mystery.

But many viewers have said it is just the latest internet hoax, with some suggesting to have seen the image posted online before.

Others suggested mystery hackers were responsible for the sick "joke".

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Tuesday, 31 May 2016

GIANT BIRDS FROM THE TOMBS OF THE PHARAOHS



Depiction of the bennu (© Jeff Dahl/WikipediaGFDL licence)

The phoenix may be the most famous feathered mystery associated with ancient Egypt - but it is not the only one. Equally mystifying is the bennu bird, which frequently appeared in the Books of the Dead - the hieroglyphic texts that accompanied the deceased in their coffins during the Fifth Dynasty (c.2466-2322 BC) at Heliopolis. Each text was a long roll of papyrus, summarising in picture writing the life of the deceased person alongside whose corpse it had been placed within the coffin. It also offered advice on gaining acceptance for entry into the next world, and revealed that upon acceptance the person would encounter the holy bennu bird, which would bear his or her soul to Ra, the supreme god.

Within the picture text, the bennu is unambiguously depicted as a gigantic heron - taller than a man, with long legs and pointed bill, a slender curved neck, and a pair of very elongate plumes on its head - resembling those of the Eurasian grey heron *Ardea cinerea*.



The Eurasian grey heron (public domain)

Archaeologist Dr Ella Hoch, from Copenhagen University's Geological Museum, became curious to discover the inspiration for the noble bennu. Perhaps it had originally been based upon the grey heron (which does exist in Egypt), but had been enlarged in the depictions to emphasise its sacred status and significant role?

Alternatively, it might have been inspired by travellers' reports of the genuinely lofty goliath heron *A. goliath*, standing up to 5 ft tall, from the Arabian peninsula and sub-Saharan Africa. By far the most compelling possibility, however, had still to be disclosed.

The goliath heron, 1838 painting (public domain)

In 1958, extensive archaeological studies began on the island of Umm an-Nar (aka Umm al-Nar), which lies adjacent to Abu Dhabi of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), in the lagoon complex off the Trucial



Coast. Great quantities of animal remains were eventually unearthed, which Hoch documented during the late 1970s in her museum's *Contributions to Palaeontology* journal. To her surprise but delight, these included some fragments constituting the distal end of the left tibiotarsus (lower leg bone) of an enormous heron - one that was probably even taller than the goliath heron, the world's tallest living species. Indeed, some estimates give its height as having been up to almost 7 ft, i.e. taller than an average human, and with a wingspan approaching 9 ft. Other remains from this newly-revealed colossus were later found, some from separate sites in the Umm an-Nar settlement, and one fragment from Failaka Island, offshore from Kuwait.

The Umm an-Nar material dates from 2,600 BC to 2,000 BC (i.e. the third millennium BC), whereas the Kuwait bone is more recent, from c.1,800 BC, thereby collectively yielding a span of time that wholly encompasses the Fifth Dynasty of Egypt (c.2,494-2,345 BC) - during which period the bennu appeared in Books of the Dead illustrations. The model for the bennu may therefore have been this now-extinct giant heron - a possibility not lost upon Hoch, who christened its species *Ardea bennuides*.



Bennu depicted on ancient Egyptian papyrus (Wikipedia/Public domain)

However, there is also evidence to suggest an even more startling prospect - that this giant heron was still alive as recently as 200 years ago.

In an *American Journal of Science* report from 1845, its author, a Mr Bonomi, disclosed that between 1821 and 1823 traveller James Burton had chanced upon three enormous conical nests, all within the space of a mile, at a place called Gebel ez Zeit (aka Gebel Zeit), situated on the Red Sea's Egyptian coast, opposite the Mount Sinai peninsula. They had been

constructed from all manner of materials, ranging from sticks, weeds, and fish bones to fragments from what had apparently been a very recent shipwreck, and which included a shoe, strands of woollen cloth, a silver watch, and the ribcage of a man - a victim of the shipwreck, whose remaining bones and tattered clothing were spotted by Burton a little further along the coast.



Modern-day, multicoloured depiction of the bennu on a tablecloth purchased by me in Cairo, Egypt, in 2006 (© Dr Karl Shuker)

The nests were colossal in size, with an estimated height (and also a basal diameter) of about 15 ft, and an apical diameter of 2.5-3 ft.

Understandably, Burton was thoroughly bemused concerning their origin - until he began to question the local Arabs. They stated that the nests were those of a huge type of stork-like bird that had deserted the area not long before his arrival there.

Facsimile of a vignette from the Egyptian Book



of the Dead of Ani – the bennu is pictured midway along the second row of depictions (public domain)

No such bird is known here today; but as his curiosity had been aroused by this episode, Bonomi undertook some investigations of his own, and uncovered persuasive, independent evidence in support of the Arabs' claim.

Delving through the documents of early writers describing Egypt in the far-off days of the pharaohs, he came upon the description of a giant stork once native to the Nile Delta region, and which, in the form

of a painted bas-relief, is sculptured upon the wall within the tomb of an officer belonging to the household of Pharaoh Cheops (also called Khufu or Shufu), from the Fourth Dynasty.



Grey heron and Oriental white stork, showing the principal morphological differences between typical heron and typical stork (© Cory/Wikipedia CC BY2.1 jp)

According to these sources, it was a bird of gregarious habits, with white plumage, long tail feathers, and a long straight bill; the male additionally bore a tuft on the back of its head, and another upon its breast. However, these features all more readily recall a heron, an egret or even certain cranes rather than a stork, and they compare well with representations of the bennu. Is it plausible, therefore, that this 'stork' was actually *Ardea bennuides*?

Whatever its taxonomic identity, however, at the time of Pharaoh Cheops (c.2,600 BC) it still survived in the vicinity of the Delta,

because specimens were occasionally trapped by the region's peasantry. The nests spied by Burton were probably the product of several generations of these birds (thereby explaining their immense size) rather than just a single pair - and their most recent contributors may have been this species' last representatives.



Heron/bennu hieroglyph in temple of Luxor, Egypt(© Dr Karl Shuker)

How tragic, and how ironic, if the bennu, the bird that bore the souls of humans to Heaven, ultimately met its own death at the hand of humans.

This ShukerNature blog post is excerpted from my forthcoming book *Still In Search Of Prehistoric Survivors*.

Posted by Dr Karl Shuker at 12:10

Reactions:

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Girl laid to rest 145 years after first burial

June 5, 2016

yahoo.com

<https://www.yahoo.com/news/girl-laid-rest-145-years-first-burial-202844837.html?nhp=1>

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — The body of a girl found last month inside a small metal casket still holding a rose was laid to rest 145 years after she was first buried under what now is a home in San Francisco.

Dozens of community members, cemetery workers and event organizers dressed in black attended her burial at Greenlawn Memorial Park in Colma, California, where about 30,000 people originally buried in San Francisco's Odd Fellows Cemetery were moved to in the early 1920s. The San Francisco Chronicle reported Sunday (<http://bit.ly/1TVsl3P>)

A local poet read an original work to honor the little girl, who appeared to be about 3 and was dubbed Miranda Eve, at the ceremony Saturday attended by about 100 people and led by a volunteer minister.

"I rejoice that you've found it in your hearts to come offer your love, your care and to be here for this little girl," retired Minister Allan Musterer told the crowd. "The discovery of Miranda is such a happening outside of what anyone could deem as normal."

The well-preserved body of the unidentified girl was found May 9 in an airtight coffin that helped preserved her golden locks of hair and even a rose she held in her hand. The metal and glass coffin was unearthed from under a concrete garage floor by workers doing remodeling work at a house in the city's Richmond District.

Since the girl's discovery, people across the county have worked on trying to find her identity and her DNA is being tested.

Elissa Davey, the founder of the Garden of Innocence charity, helped arrange the girl's reburial.

"It was tough, very tough," Davey said about the process, as she began to cry. "But she is not just our child. She is everyone's."

Barbara and Heather Reynolds traveled from Sacramento to attend the ceremony.

"I just felt that she needed to have people here," Heather Reynolds said. "The amount of people who came forward is amazing."

Information from: The San Francisco Chronicle, <http://www.sfgate.com>

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Gravediggers compete in race judged on speed _ and style

June 3, 2016

yahoo.com

<https://www.yahoo.com/news/gravediggers-compete-race-judged-speed-style-094659140.html?nhp=1>



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General view of the first National Grave Digging competition at the public cemetery of Debrecen, 226 kms east of Budapest, Hungary, Friday, June 3, 2016. Eighteen two-man teams of Hungarian gravediggers are demonstrating their skills for a place in a regional championship to be held in Slovakia. (Zsolt Czegledi/MTI via AP)

DEBRECEN, Hungary (AP) — Digging their way to the top, 18 two-man teams of Hungarian gravediggers displayed their skills Friday for a place in a regional championship to be held in Slovakia later this year.

Participants in the contest held in plot 37A of the public cemetery of the eastern Hungarian city of Debrecen were being judged on their speed but also getting points for style — the look of the finished grave mounds.

Janos Jonas, 63, who teamed with his son, Csaba, saw the competition run by the Hungarian Association of Cemetery Maintainers and Operators as a sort of last hurrah as he was just a few weeks from retirement.

"We didn't have to prepare in any special way because we do this every day," said Jonas, from the nearby village of Hosszupalyi. "This is good earth, quite soft and humid, just right for the event."

Organizer Iren Kari said they hoped the race would help increase respect and recognition for the gravediggers' profession and attract more people to the job, which is under threat, for example by the increasing popularity of cremations.

"These men see death every day. Sometimes people joke about them while they work, but gravediggers are human, too," said Kari, who is advocating for gravediggers to get access to psychological support to better handle the strains of the job. "We are having difficulties finding replacements for our retiring employees. Young people today don't like to dig and work."

All contestants had shovels, rakes, axes and pickaxes to dig graves 0.8 meters (2 feet 7 inches) wide, 2 meters (6 feet 6 inches) long and 1.6 meters (5 feet 3 inches) deep, but no two teams seemed to use the same technique.

Some preferred to dig simultaneously, while others had one man digging while the other formed the dirt into neat piles around the gravesite. For safety reasons, like the collapse of a grave wall, only one member of each team was allowed to work in the grave after reaching a depth of 1 meter (3 feet 3 inches).

After every team finished digging — the fastest time was just over 34 minutes — there was a short rest and then the dirt was shoveled back into the graves, each topped with a burial mound about the size of a large casket.

"We take special pride in the burial mounds, on which we place the flowers and wreaths at the end of the funeral," Jonas said, relating how while drinking on the job was strictly forbidden, relatives often gave gravediggers a bottle of palinka, a traditional Hungarian fruit brandy, as a gratuity.

Some teams wore white shirts, ties and elegant vests, while others were in t-shirts or overalls. One pair wore plastic coveralls, but everyone was sweating by the end of the race on a warm spring day.

"The hardest part of the job is to deal with the mourners," said Debrecen gravedigger Laszlo Toth. "But it's a good job, with good colleagues and a good environment."

Toth, who won the event with teammate Janos Racz, will compete in a regional race planned to be held in November in Trencin, Slovakia.

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World's longest tunnel opens under Swiss Alps

By Tim Hume, CNN Updated 12:14 PM ET, Wed June 1, 2016
2016-06-01T10:06:14Z

cnn.com



Constructing the world's longest tunnel



Constructing the world's longest tunnel



Constructing the world's longest tunnel

- Leaders of Germany, France and Italy were on hand for opening ceremonies

(CNN) Seventeen years after construction crews started boring beneath the Swiss Alps, the world's longest, deepest tunnel officially opened Wednesday.

Fittingly for a project billed as Switzerland's "construction of the century," the Gotthard Base Tunnel was inaugurated amid colorful, sometimes surreal scenes, with visiting dignitaries treated to costumed dancers, fireworks and plenty of yodeling and alphorns.

Artists perform during the grand opening for the tunnel, the world's longest and deepest rail tunnel.

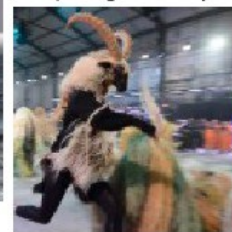
European leaders including German Chancellor Angela Merkel, French President Francois Hollande and Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi

joined Swiss President Johann Schneider-Ammann on the first official journey on the line.

The 57-kilometer long (35-mile long) tunnel creates a high-speed rail link deep beneath the famous



Switzerland tunnel opening ceremony 2



gotthard opening dancer

mountain range, connecting northern and southern Europe.

<http://www.cnn.com/2016/06/01/europe/switzerland-longest-tunnel-gotthard/>



switzerland tunnel
opening ceremony 1



Gotthard leaders



01 gotthard tunnel 0601

And with characteristic Swiss punctuality, this major engineering feat has been completed on schedule.

Shortcut through the Alps

Reaching a depth of 2,300 meters (7,545 feet, almost 1.5 miles) the tunnel will slice an hour off the travel time between Zurich,

Switzerland, and Milan, Italy.

Trains will travel the tunnel, which runs between the towns of Erstfeld in the north and Bodio in the south, in only 20 minutes, reaching speeds of up to 250 kilometers an hour (155 mph), according to the Swiss Travel System.

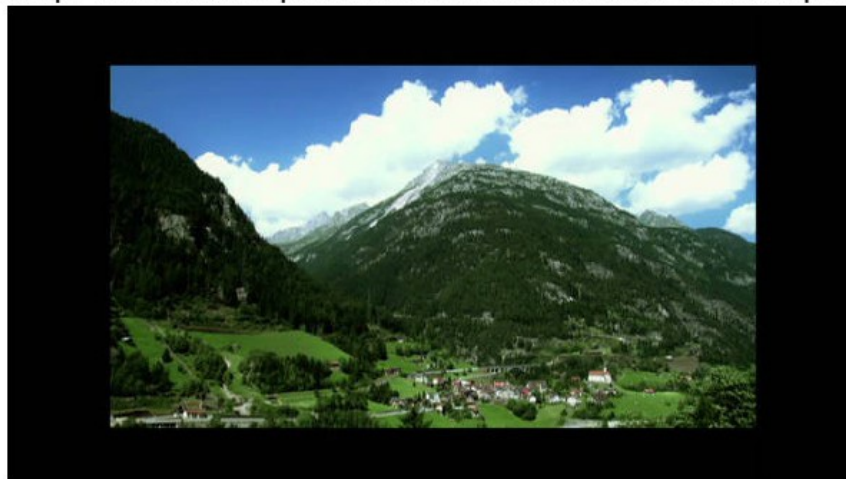
Beyond the anticipated benefits for travel and trade, the project will provide a direct and economic route for freight transport.

AlpTransit Gotthard, the company behind the construction of the tunnel, says the project will boost the efficiency and reliability of rail freight, making it more competitive.

Gotthard overtakes the 53.9-kilometer Seikan Tunnel in northern Japan as the longest rail tunnel in the world, relegating the 50.5-kilometer Channel Tunnel between Britain and France into third place.

Environmental benefits

The line, which will begin full operations in December, will establish a mainline rail corridor through Europe from the Dutch port of Rotterdam in the north to the Italian port of Genoa on the Mediterranean.



Rail tunnel will make Alps trip faster

Rail tunnel will make Alps trip faster

It is expected to bring significant environmental benefits by diverting freight sent by road on to rail instead.

"The main reason for the construction of this tunnel was to get the goods traffic off the motorway and onto the trains," Simon Peggs of AlpTransit Gotthard, told CNN when the tunnel was completed.

"It's just getting more and more (busy) every year and it was estimated that by 2020, the

roads will be so blocked that something had to be done."

It is anticipated the economic benefits of increased trade and travel efficiency will make inroads into the tunnel's \$12 billion construction cost.

Alpine route remains

The new tunnel, greenlighted by the Swiss public in a national referendum in 1992, bypasses the scenic original Gotthard line.

That line, popular with tourists for its panoramic views as it winds through the mountain range, crossing 205 bridges in the process, will continue to operate, the Swiss Travel System says.

How to build the world's longest train tunnel

Safety pledge

About 2,600 workers have been involved in the construction of the tunnel, with nine losing their lives in

the process. About 3,200 kilometers of copper cable was used in the tunnel's construction -- enough to stretch from Madrid to Moscow.



A giant drilling machine completes the tunnel beneath the Swiss Alps during a ceremony in October 2010.

AlpTransit Gotthard CEO Renzo Simoni said that among the logistical challenges involved in the project was cooling air temperatures within the tunnel.

"The deeper you get, the higher temperature of rock is," he said, adding that without appropriate ventilation, temperatures in the tunnel could reach 45 degrees Celsius (113 degrees Fahrenheit).

"We had to cool down all the air inside down to 28 degrees Celsius," he said.

"You need a lot of electricity to bring fresh air from outside into the working place."

He claimed that the tunnel was "10 times safer than the

existing railway network in Switzerland.

"If you are doing a journey, for example, from Zurich to Milan, the safest part of your journey would be the passage of the tunnel," he said.

The final two meters of rock were drilled through amid fanfare six years ago.

CNN's Hilary Whiteman, George Webster and journalist Sofia Couceiro contributed to this report.

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The Gulf Breeze Six

[philipcoppens.com](http://www.philipcoppens.com)
<http://www.philipcoppens.com/gulfbreeze6.html>

On July 9, 1990, six US military intelligence analysts from the 701st Military Intelligence Brigade at Augsburg, West Germany, at that time the biggest NSA (National Security Agency) listening post in the world outside the United States, deserted their posts, somehow convinced that the end of the world was nigh. It is one of the most extra-ordinary stories...

Philip Coppens



On July 20, 1990, the Northwest Florida Daily News ran "6 AWOL SOLDIERS SAY THEY AIMED TO KILL ANTICHRIST", continuing: "Gulf Breeze - Six soldiers, reported by an unofficial military newspaper to be on a mission to kill the Antichrist, were charged Thursday with desertion from their intelligence unit in West Germany, Pentagon spokesman said." It was a most bizarre headline and one of the most bizarre stories... ever.

Eleven days earlier, Spc. Kenneth Beason, Spc. Vance Davis, Sgt. Annette Eccleston, Pfc. Michael Hueckstaedt, Pfc. Kris Perlock and Pfc. William Setterberg went AWOL – absent without leave from the 701st Military Intelligence Brigade. The group left their station in Germany, travelled to Chattanooga, Tennessee, where they bought a van, and drove to Gulf Breeze, Florida, at the time a

noted UFO hotspot. Still, it was not initially clear whether the UFO sightings in the area were linked with their desertion, if only because most of these men had done their basic training at Curtiss Station in nearby NAS (Naval Air Station) Pensacola, which meant that they were familiar with the area.

Five days after their flight, on Saturday July 14, a broken taillight on the van resulted in a routine traffic stop, and Hueckstaedt, the driver of the van, was detained by police when a computer check indicated that he was wanted for desertion. The remaining five were later rounded up and taken to Fort Benning, Georgia, where they were kept in solitary confinement, and communicated. Their fate – a possible execution – hung in the balance, until their families leaked their predicament to the press, resulting in reactions from Senators Casman and Dole. Surprisingly enough, three weeks after their arrest, instead of being severely punished by a military tribunal, they were discharged from Fort Knox – with full honours! Following Colin Powell's dissent to this incredible verdict – after all, they were deserters – this was withdrawn. Instead, they were reduced to the lowest rank and forfeited half a month's pay. Since, military officials have refused to discuss the investigation.

What was going on? A Pentagon spokesman stated that the six were members of a group called "The End of the World", but this statement was later retracted, saying that there was no such group. When the case was declassified, 1400 out of 1600 pages were withheld.

The case is intriguing – to say the least. Some believed that these people were simply mad and that the Military merely wanted to sweep everything under the carpet – both parties were already sufficiently embarrassed. Others argued that the six were the subjects of an advanced military mind control experiment. After all, wasn't this the perfect test? Top – top top even – military security experts... wouldn't the military want to know whether there were certain things that would make such people desert? And before finding out whether this would work on the enemy, it surely had to be tested on the own troops? In an as real as possible setting...

Speculation was now rife. One trend had it that UFOs were at the core of the mystery. It was said that Beason was interested in UFOs and wanted to attend a UFO conference. The Mutual UFO Network (MUFON) did hold its 21st annual symposium in Pensacola on July 6-8, but as the group apparently only defected on July 9, this obviously would have been the worst organised trip ever. Furthermore, who would risk their life just to attend a UFO conference? Still, one Stan Johnson, a Morristown photographer, said in a telephone interview with the Pensacola News Journals, that he had picked up Beason and Hueckstaedt on July 6 at the McGee-Tyson Airport in Knoxville, Tennessee – three days before the official version had them desert. Either Johnson was lying, wrong on dates... or the "official story" was wrong. Though Gulf Breeze Police Chief Jerry Brown stated the soldiers did not arrive in the area until July 9, Beason was said to have spent the night of July 7 with his sister and her husband, Carol and Charles Reed, at their home in Talbott, Tenn., according to the Knoxville News-Sentinel. So... was the true purpose of their visit to attend the UFO conference? And if so, why did the official version change the dates? At best, it did not make sense... At worse, it was incomprehensible.



Vance Davis

A first hand account that could shed light on the story was provided in 1995, when Vince Davis published "Unbroken Promises". The book is probably one of the most mind-boggling works ever written, irrelevant of the fact whether it is the total truth, or an "enhanced version" of it. If the mind boggles already, jaws drop when you read the Davis book.

Davis states that as a teenager, he had enrolled in Silva Mind Control courses that were held in Alex Merklinger's school in New York, and mastered techniques of self-hypnosis through active imagination. During one of his trances, he met a green-skinned, yellow-clad alien female named Kia, who, over one night, corrected his flat-footedness. Davis said that Kia "told me that she came from a planet forty-five light years away from Earth, that had been destroyed by another race. Her race, the

Kiasseions, were telepaths that were enroute to Earth to assist the Alliance in protecting the human race. They were scheduled to arrive by late 1992. The Kiasseion civilization had been reduced to five spacecraft carrying about three thousand people per ship [...] Her husband had been killed, and she had taken his place as Commander of this small armada, with her two grown sons in charge of two of the remaining ships." Kia became Vance's guardian. Nothing unusual so far, if at least you are familiar with what many other channelers have stated about their contacts. But Davis held the "toppest" security clearances in the country.

But what caused them to go AWOL? "Ouija board sessions." According to Davis, the Ouija board put the six soldiers in touch with an entity that named herself Safire, and others, including those presenting themselves as the Old Testament prophet Zechariah, Mark and Timothy of New Testament, and the Blessed Virgin Mary herself.

Between December 1989 and July 1990, the Ouija-summoned spirits gave the group a series of predictions of coming world events which, Davis claims, were passed along to military authorities upon their arrest, together with the copious notes that were taken by the group during the eight Ouija sessions. This at least suggests that the story was true and not fabricated by the group upon their arrest: they could provide documents that Ouija sessions were at the basis of their obsession to arrive in Florida.

10 When I speak to you, you will want to hide his letter, but we remember that it is the highest possible command. 11 The following letter may sound wild, but what may seem about the Apostle in Christ's time for it is wild. "In the end, group men will see visions of that to come and then themselves away for the battle." 12 May you understand and take warning in this. Time has come for a decision to be made, and they made theirs. Their words will be known throughout the lands and many will be murdered for knowing them. 13 You will search for them and thousands more like them, but you will be searching for naught. For God takes care of his Elect and those that follow them. Please take heed to the warning mentioned above. 14 These people that you will hunt for is but a shadow to blind eyes. You will find traces of the wind which blows their very footsteps. Remember what you were told in church because the time is nigh and the hour is here. 15 Come and conquer with all the might you possess, for God has set a place for you in the wilderness yet, you desire the burning that fire desires your very souls, with the one called Satan. 16 If you listen to this letter, you who claim to be of Christ, our Lord, then you will hear unto these words that follow, and those of you who know of the truth and feel it's full, then leave all and search for the Elect and their followers as they are of God's Chosen leaders. 17 Read this with an open heart and humble mind. I would love to have all you brethren with us in heaven at the end, but as your own little worldly minds, you will be lost to them. Search in an end, but with Christ and his teachings, you can be saved until the end which is life forever. Amen. 18 This is but the last warning from us that teaches of Christ without judgement. The Elect were chosen, but would never when the world was new. Follow those that are humble in spirit but fervent in Christ's words. For they will give their very lives for you who believe, and will carry out a death to those of evil hearts. 19 You of the world, leave carefully, the time is now to wake up your spirits and heed the warning. I'm the last to speak to you ever, now the Elect take over the mission of the Apostles. 20 These twelve, who are true to the gospel of Christ, these you must hear, and find, the spirit will guide you for safety to the hidden places by God. Surely they have ran upon God's orders and will be written in the book of life. 21 And it was said in the end that a great shout would be heard around the land, then all would see the trembling of the Great King of the World. 22 Then from the heart comes great cry, of the chosen of God, and the mighty warriors led by them. 23 From the Earth comes the Elect to ponder the Great King's mysterious heart toward the one called Jesus. 24 Fire shall not touch those sure of heart and soul when the Great King calls to him, and the mouth of God comes open and answers those wicked of spirit and those not believing the truth of the Seven Thunders, of the Seven Josephs, for the end, and I heard not the thunders meant to be. 25 Now, we say farewell till that time of the new world and city. 26 Now, we say farewell till that time of the new world and city.

When some of Safire's prophecies, both minor and significant, started to come true, one stating the exact dynamics and the number of casualties of a mayor earthquake in Iran (292,236 deaths), it convinced the six that they were dealing with genuine trans-human encounters. They felt that they were chosen to act as instruments of God's will – their oath to the military "obviously" seemed to be of less importance than following the orders of God. They asked Safire how to carry out their divine mission. Safire instructed them to flee the military, regardless of consequences, because they were needed to help lead the world through an impending cataclysm. So they did.

Davis states that in 1989, he "began to sense that the lines of demarcation between the physical world and the spiritual one were beginning to blur." It is here that we need to introduce Beason, who was even more instrumental in the group's flight. He believed in reincarnation and believed that he had been sacrificed to the gods in a previous life. He also believed that the US government was in cahoots with aliens and that evidence for this could actually be found in Augsburg, the NSA site where they worked. It was also Beason who knew Anna Foster, at whose house in Gulf Breeze most of the groups would later be hiding – and arrested. He was in love with her.

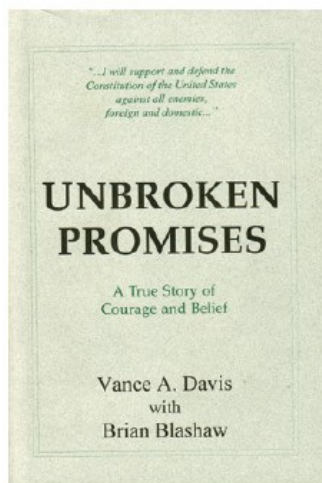
This explains the setting of the desertion, but not the reason. Was it true that they had come to Gulf Breeze to see UFOs? To attend a UFO conference? Davis states that Safire warned them of a coming war. Mankind was about to make an evolutionary step, which is why many alien entities were in orbit, on or under the earth – and/or in telepathic contact with the likes of him. There were two alien groups: the Alliance, the good guys, who believed in free will, and "the Others", who were abducting people and performing medical experiments on them. Safire "confirmed" to the group that the US government was in cahoots with the aliens, as they had suspected all along.

On an eschatological level, she stated that 1998 would be the date for the false Messiah to make his appearance; the year was three times his number (666). She told them to leave Europe, as there was (in the early 1990s) going to be a US-European conflict, which would make it hard for the group to continue their learning – and would endanger the role they were told they would play during the upcoming evolutionary step. They would leave Europe asap, hide out, before beginning their new life. Their choice for a hide out fell on Gulf Breeze. Not

because of UFOs, but because they knew the area and Anna lived there.

When they deserted, each left a copy of the letter dictated by the spirits, in the hope that the letter might make its way into the hands of the president – so that he would know of the dire times ahead. But despite the fact that the survival of the world was at stake, it seems that destiny still had time to have love play its game. Davis had had visions of his “Soul Mate” when he was a teenager. It is when they arrived at Anna’s house, that Davis saw his “Soul Mate”: it was Anna’s roommate, Diana, whom he recognised from the visions more than a decade before.

If the spirit world was guiding them, leading them away from harm, why were they eventually captured? “Safire had told us that Gulf Breeze would be safe until Friday. Then we would stop in Texas to pick up our stuff, and head for the mountain states to begin the rest of our lives, and prepare for what was to come.” But love made Davis and Beason stay longer, and hence they did not leave on the Friday they “should” have left. “Fate” then played its card through a defective taillight and the rest was history.



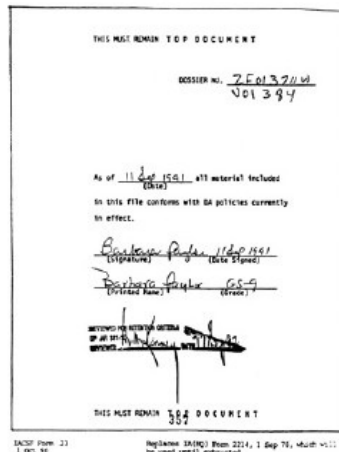
What is at the bottom of this story? At its most basic level, it shows that certain NSA operatives were dabbling with alien-Christian eschatology – and went AWOL as a consequence. But is that all there is to it? We only have Davis’ word and his interpretation for it, but he does suggest that they may have been part of an experiment – as some observers noted at the time when their story hit the press. First, early on, when Davis was on his way over to Ft. Meade, there was a woman on his bus who told him his name and said that “God showed me that you will help change the world.” It was a prophecy – at a time when Safire had not yet appeared on the scene and “confirm” his divine mission.

Davis also had an intriguing career. He noted that he had his initial posting in Ft. Meade, which was rare. “I had done work in psychic research back at Fort Meade, and was surprised at the seriousness with which our military approached this subject. I realized then that my fast-track to NSA was probably due to my Silva Mind Control background.” It suggests that Davis was followed – if not singled out – by the NSA early on.

Fast forward to their desertion. In the book, Davis states that “what we didn’t realize at the time was that the government had known of our plans and had an operative on the plane with us, just as Safire had told us. And they lost us when we arrived in Atlanta, just as she had assured us they would.” But the “best evidence” that they were indeed monitored is how the people at Anna’s house were arrested. Hueckstaedt swore that he did not tell the authorities where his fellow deserters were hiding out. Still, the authorities were able to quickly round them up. It suggests that someone knew where they were – and if that is indeed the case, Davis’ notion that the government knew that they were about to desert and followed them during their desertion, makes sense.

As bizarre as the story is, there is an even more bizarre twist, which seems to highlight that if all of this is true, it can’t possibly be true for all soldiers or NSA personnel. Davis claims that

when he joined the NSA, he was “retrained in history”. He states: “What I learned was why history happened, who history was, why or when history was. The dates in the book are not all that accurate. Those are accepted dates not factual dates. To give an example. The founding of this country did not occur. The founding fathers were already meeting many years before the advent, the war against England, occurred. There was already a plan in place for the founding of new country. It was not just a spur because British soldiers shot someone or the stand-back. It was the series of events that happened over the period of 60 to 70 years. And they have been planning for the long time.” Such teachings seem bizarre, if only because they serve no real purpose for NSA personnel, except to provide this recruit with a conspiratorial outlook on history.



Where it goes off the wall is what Davis was talking about next. To cut a longish story short, he was claiming that there were “buildings” at White Sands which were “not ours”, suggesting they were not human – and very old. But he then jumps onto UFOs, stating that in the 1960s, a new word was introduced for them: AVC, or Alien Visitation Craft. And listen to this: “the human race was not created, born, linked to the apes, we are survivors of a great war. The human race as we see ourselves today, even our ancient relatives, were basically put on this planet and cut-off from the rest of the Universe.” And: “We have a special gene, that cannot be copied, cannot be manipulated. They have tried. We were told that is called the Jesus gene.” We can only wonder why an NSA operative is “required” to “know” this, in the unlikelihood

that any of this would be true to begin with. There is no “need to know” and as such, should not be told. Worst, if true, we have a picture in which the NSA “educates” its new recruits that we are all alien descendents, and then allows them play with the Ouija board, only to have some of them go off half across the world, in the belief that the world is about to end. Though it seems that this fate befell Davis and co., it seems unlikely this is the fate of every NSA recruit. Hopefully.

“Logic” – which does not really come into this story, but somehow needs to be applied to keep a reasonable level of sanity, I would suggest – suggests that something else was going; that this group was singled out and became the victim of an experiment, which their pre-joining interests made them predisposed towards, and which “someone” carefully remoulded to see to test out a hypothesis. If this is true, then the scenario was successful, and when the test was concluded, they were rounded up, brought in... and allowed to tell their story, so that the public disclosure of their story would serve part of the exercise as well.

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Gunman cried when he saw tarot card of the devil

kgw.com

Killer cried when he saw tarot card of the devil

Rachel Millard, The (Brighton, East Sussex) Argus , KGW9:57 AM. PDT May 27, 2016



BRIGHTON, England — For 10 days last year, a man went about his life as his roommate lay dead on the kitchen floor of the home they shared.

It wasn't until he went to a tarot card reader where his card reading revealed the devil, that he confessed to murder.

Last week Star Randel-Hanson was jailed for life with a minimum of 15 years after being convicted of murder after a two-week trial at Croydon Crown Court in England.

Randel-Hanson had stabbed his roommate Derick Marney to death and left his body on the floor.

During his card reading at JJ Tarot in the seaside community of Brighton, England, the 10 cards he picked out of a deck of 52 included death and justice. He broke down as Jayne Braiden read his third card, the devil.

She said: "He started crying just after that.

"The first was the blasted tower — falling out with someone, really serious row.

"Then there was the emperor, dominant male.

"Then the devil card means obviously something awful.

"He broke down and I said to him, 'look I can see here that this is not good, you need to tell me everything, let's talk'.

"He said: 'It's terrible, I killed him.'

"He told me that he killed him but he did not mean to and it was awful."

Braiden calmly told the 56-year-old that she would have to tell police and asked whether he would mind, before stepping out of her shop to do so.

It took an hour for police to arrive because the dispatcher downgraded the call to a non-emergency.

Officers believed her call on the May 5, 2015, bank holiday was a hoax, Braiden said.

She said: "The call handler told me it would take up to 55 minutes. I said I cannot hold him here.

"I think I thought they would be here in maximum 15 minutes.

"Then I came back and asked him if he wanted a drink. So I went next door and said, 'don't ask, but can I please have a bottle of water'.

"I did not raise the alarm to anyone else (on the seafront) because they would have panicked, so I did

not say anything to anyone. It would have made the situation worse.

"I gave him the water and then we sat chatting."

She took notes as Randel-Hanson discussed his relationship with Marney and other parts of his life.

Police eventually arrested Randel-Hanson and when they went to his apartment, they found Marney's body on the kitchen floor.

Braiden said she did not feel threatened by the murderer and felt it was her "duty" to keep him there until police arrived.

'I knew I had to keep him there'

A tarot reader for 25 years, Braiden has seen it all.

Marital problems, secrets, troubles: people confide in her all kinds of things.

But until now, never a murder. Having cast her eye at all 10 cards, she could see before his confession where things were going.

"I saw the sentence at the end so I knew it was something he would be put away for," she recalled. Yet even as the confession tumbled out of him, she stayed calm.

"I wanted to keep it calm," she said. "There were loads of children — it was a family day on the seaside.

"Me going out there screaming would not have helped anybody."

After giving him the water, they sat at her table with about one foot between them.

"I asked him the name of the deceased, where he had worked, Derick's friends," she recalled.

"Where the wound was, where the knife was. He was getting upset and started crying."

During the trial, the court heard how Randel-Hanson and Marney, 70, met at a spiritualist church in Brighton. A year later Marney invited him to move into his apartment "for company." Randel-Hanson claimed Marney had sexually assaulted him three times.

He said he must have stabbed Marney after the older man confronted him while making sandwiches, but denied murder.

In the tarot shop, Braiden did not ask him about specifics of the crime. She wanted to keep things calm, keeping an eye out for police.

In court, Braiden was a key witness, where she showed the cards he had picked — although the ones about justice were kept from jurors. It was in court she first became aware of the brutality of Randel-Hanson's attack.

She said despite their rapport, she has no sympathy for him.

"I formed a rapport because I had to," she said. "I knew what I was doing. I knew that I had to keep him there. I knew that it was my duty as well. And I am big on duty. I can let petty things go — but that is duty."

From game to means of divination

Tarot readers claim to use cards to gain an insight into people's pasts and futures.

The tarot is a pack of typically 78 cards (although sometimes less are used), categorized as Major and Minor Arcana — greater and lesser secrets.

The 22 Major Arcana cards depict images such as the devil, hanging man, justice, death and swords. Minor Arcana feature symbols such as wands, swords, cups and pentacles.

The cards represent different emotions, fates, archetypes, or characteristics used, with the prospect that whatever is dealt will reveal something about the person to whom they are dealt.

Tarot cards were originally used in 14th century Italy for playing games.

Their use in divination can be traced back to as early as the 16th century but more strongly in the 18th century, when Giacomo Casanova wrote in his diary that his Russian mistress frequently used playing cards for divination.

Some tarot readers say they should be read as a guide rather than a straightforward prediction of the future, and can help people solve problems in their lives.

Follow Rachel Millard on Twitter: [@Argus_RachelM](#)

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The Lady (10)



Death and The Lady. (2)









The Most Haunted Places in Los Angeles

kcet.org

October 28, 2015

Los Angeles is full of haunted places, but you can't access most of its murder mansions, deathbeds, hotels-turned-condos, or abandoned hospitals without trespassing, risking fines, or worse yet -- imprisonment. But if you'd like to make contact with the other side, there are plenty of haunted locations throughout the L.A. area that you can access legally (some with only minor finagling).

Maybe you've been mingling with the ghosts at some of these places this whole time, but never thought twice about that flicker of light in your peripheral view, or the shadow that seemed to disappear. For a little taste of paranormal activity, visit one of these historic L.A. landmarks and be reminded that you are not alone -- even when you're by yourself.



All photos by Sandi Hemmerlein

All photos by Sandi Hemmerlein

El Pueblo de Los Angeles

Supernatural spirits abound where the city of L.A. started: at El Pueblo de Los Angeles and its immediate surrounding area. Because this area was essentially the original town square before moving a few blocks west, it was also the town gallows and the site of public hangings and their hanging trees. Some of them occurred directly in front of City Hall, which seems bedeviled by a ghost or two. Security cameras often pick up an

image of someone walking around locked offices at night, but when guards go to investigate, they find nothing. When they return to their night shift station, they frequently hear footsteps following them.

Los Angeles was once a dangerous, violent place to live, filled with gunfire and murder. The lawless and the pious were forced to coexist in the establishment of a new sprawling metropolis. At El Pueblo, early adobes were torn down, and the remains of more than 100 people were improperly excavated and relocated from the first cemetery at El Pueblo, next to La Placita church. The area where Union Station now stands, and directly adjacent to it, was not only the site of Old Chinatown but also the infamous and horrific Chinese Massacre of 1871, the largest mass lynching in American history. For a more lighthearted encounter, take your French Dip to one of the upstairs dining rooms at Philippe The Original, where the ladies of the former bordello are said to linger.

Heritage Square Museum

Where in L.A. can you visit a real haunted house, and not just a movie set? You can have your pick of them at Heritage Square Museum, which has become a repository for displaced



Heritage Square

Victorian homes, a carriage house, a train station, and a church. They all faced demolition at one time or another, and their only option for preservation was relocation. A lot of history from several different areas of L.A. -- Mount Washington, Pasadena, Boyle Heights, Lincoln Heights, Downtown, and the Westside -- means a lot of different ghosts converging in one creepy place.

The Perry Mansion is probably best-known (or most widely promoted) for its specters, but what about the ghosts of

the houses that were lost? Two of the last remaining Victorian houses from Bunker Hill -- The Salt Box and The Castle -- were saved from demolition and brought to this city-owned parcel of land in Montecito Heights, but lack of sufficient security resulted in both being burned down to the ground just months after their arrival. With their destruction, nothing was left of Bunker Hill, and if there were any ghosts that came to Heritage Square with these Victorians, they were left to roam elsewhere. Maybe the ghosts at Heritage Square are those of the Bunker Hill buildings themselves...



Colorado Bridge

Colorado Street Bridge

Any place with the nickname "Suicide Bridge" has got to be haunted, right? Sure, most of the troubled souls who jumped off the 150-foot Colorado Street Bridge in Pasadena did so during the Great Depression, which had the highest rate of suicide than any other period in recorded history. But even in recent years, the precipice attracts about a dozen jumpers a year. Neither spiked barriers nor signs declaring "There Is Hope" have completely thwarted the suicidal tendencies of the bridge's visitors, though some would-be jumpers have been discouraged from their

attempts by rescue workers arriving at the scene just in time. It still has a pretty sinister -- and haunted -- reputation. There was even a baby who was thrown off the bridge by her mother, who then followed with a flying leap. The mother died, but the baby survived, her fall broken by tree branches.

Despite its grisly history, walking and driving across this civil engineering landmark is a joy. It was built as a "work of art," and hasn't lost its appeal in the century since its completion. Eleven Beaux Arts arches, constructed out of 11,000 cubic yards of steel-reinforced concrete, rise up over the Arroyo Seco, rounding the ravine at a fifty-degree angle. You're just as likely to encounter restless spirits down below as up above, so take in the view from the Arroyo trail

underneath the bridge as well. But if you visit at night, be prepared for the lights to go out. Is it the work of the Woman in White, or just faulty electrical wiring? You be the judge.



rockhaven

Rockhaven Sanitarium

Sometimes, when people really love being in a place in life, they tend to linger there even after death. Rockhaven Sanitarium is the last standing of the dozens of sanitariums that once dotted the hillsides of the Crescenta Valley in the early 20th century. It was a peaceful place for women with mild mental disorders (and, later, the elderly with dementia) to soak in the view and breathe in the fresh air. It was an escape from the state-run mental hospitals of the time, whose horrors included lobotomies and hydrotherapies that brought on both hyper-

and hypothermia. In fact, Rockhaven was such a nice place to live, even death couldn't discharge some of its patients.

The city of Glendale purchased Rockhaven in 2008, but they have yet to restore, reopen, or develop it, leaving it essentially abandoned. But according to security guards, live-in caretakers, and cleanup crews, the former sanitarium is anything but vacant. Unusual encounters include lights switching on, clocks changing time, figures passing in front of windows, disembodied voices, knocking on the walls, and items appearing out of nowhere (most spectacularly, a piano that had previously only been seen in vintage photographs).

Who might haunt the hallways of this retreat, once known as the "Screen Actors Sanitarium"? Perhaps it's Marilyn Monroe's mother, who attempted to escape out of a tiny closet window more than once. Or could it be Glinda the Good Witch (actress Billie Burke) from *The Wizard of Oz* or Clark Gable's first wife Josephine Dillon? The sanitarium's own founder, Nurse Agnes Richards, continued to work at Rockhaven until just months before her death at age 84 in 1967, but perhaps she never left. To investigate for yourself, sign up for one of the occasional tours conducted by Friends of Rockhaven. Otherwise, the property is closed to the public and is closely guarded.

Greystone Mansion

Greystone Mansion is probably L.A.'s most famous murder mansion -- and site of the first official murder when it was the newly-formed city of Beverly Hills. However, it's surrounded by the loveliest of gardens, cypress trees, turtles, ponds, and other water features in Greystone Park, not giving any hint as to the murder-suicide that occurred within those Gothic walls in 1929.

The manor's storied past is now part of its appeal. Scores of creepy films have been shot here, and the semi-annual murder mystery play *The Manor* actually reenacts how Ned



Greystone

Doheny was found shot to death, only five months after moving in with this family, in the actual mansion where the murder took place. Is it Ned's footsteps that security guards hear during their nightly patrols? Or are they those of his secretary Hugh Plunkett, who allegedly murdered Ned and then committed suicide?

You can find the garden variety of hauntings at Greystone -- footsteps, voices, doors opening and shutting, lights flickering, objects moving -- but they all seem to be a sign of unrest and distress. Unexplained phenomena have sent more than one security guard

running from the manor, never looking back. You can access the interior and hear some ghost stories during public tours conducted by a park ranger on the first Saturday of the month, December through April only.



BobBakerMarionettes

The Bob Baker Marionette Theater

It's pretty common to hear ghost stories associated with historic theaters. What better place to hang out for eternity than in the balcony of a grand movie palace, taking in a show whenever you want? But the Bob Baker Marionette Theater isn't like the grand cinemas on Broadway or Hollywood Boulevard. Situated under the First Street Bridge directly across from the Belmont Tunnel, the theater itself was once a run-down scene shop in a not-so-nice neighborhood near downtown. With his partner, Alton Wood,

puppeteer Bob Baker transformed it into a magical performance space. Its main denizens are puppets -- and ghosts.

The building has been threatened with closure for over 20 years now, and with the death of Bob Baker himself in 2014, its fate is even more uncertain. Understandably, the ghosts are restless. There are the strings that break, and the strings that go bump in the night. Ghostly apparitions appear in mirror reflections. A broken cell phone once started making calls on its own from inside a locked locker in the middle of the night. The current staff guesses that these little nudges may be coming from the ghosts of the theater's former puppeteers -- especially those not particularly happy with how an individual performance may be going. In typical theater tradition, they leave a "ghost light" on for anything that might be moving around at night. Perhaps it's the puppets themselves that come to life when everybody else goes to sleep.



QueenMary

Queen Mary Long Beach

The Queen Mary is both a former World War II troopship once known as "The Grey Ghost" and a luxury oceanliner that is now permanently moored in Long Beach Harbor as a "floating hotel."

There is so much reported paranormal activity on this enormous cruise ship that nearly every single deck, cabin, hallway, bar and restaurant on it is considered to be haunted. Its hauntings have earned the ship a spot on TIME's Top 10 Most Haunted Places in America 2008. And it hasn't gotten any less

haunted since then. Hotel guests and staff alike have described hundreds of ghosts, which seem to be particularly concentrated in certain "hot spots," including the infamous first class swimming pool, engine room, boiler room, and Isolation Ward.

Now, the ghostliness of The Queen Mary is a big part of its appeal and notoriety. Since being taken out of commission in 1967, it's been used as a filming location for *The X-Files*, *Unsolved Mysteries*, *Murder, She Wrote*, and countless other TV shows, music videos, commercials, and films. Paranormal investigation teams have tried to document the otherworldly happenings on this Art Deco landmark, and the hotel hosts its own paranormal tours and haunted houses.

Your best bet for spotting a shadowy figure might be just to get a stateroom or suite for the night and wait for the goosebumps to come. Look for the sailor who died in the ship's engine room, any of the children who drowned in the ship's pool, and the "lady in white" (there's always one of those). Check for swimmers taking a dip in the pool, despite the fact it hasn't been filled with water in years. But be sure to look twice: if you see a figure dressed in 1930s attire milling about, it may just be one of the actual attendees of the annual Art Deco Festival.

These are just a handful of locations known for their hauntings, but there are plenty of other places -- if you visit pretty much any historic landmark in L.A., someone will probably say it's haunted. And if you're lucky, the ghost can play piano, and she takes requests.

- **Sandi Hemmerlein**

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memorie of M A N.

Which lately happened at *Dichet* in Sommerfetshire, and sent
by diuers credible witnesss to be published in L O N D O N.

Also a Prophecie reuealed by a poore Countrey Maide, who being dead the
first of October last, 1613. 24. houres, reuiued againe, and lay five
dayes weeping, and continued prophesying of strange euents to
come, and so died the 5. day following.

Witnessed by M. *Nicholas Faber*, Parson of the Towne, and diuers
worthy Gentlemen of the same countrey. 1613,

Withall, *Lincolneshire* Teares. For a great deluge, in which five Villages
were lamentably drowned this present month.



At London printed for *John Trundle*: and are to be sold
at Christ Church gate, 1614.

Healthy 'Vampires' Emerge From Graves In Medieval Polish Cemetery - Forbes

forbes.com

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/kristinakillgrove/2016/06/01/healthy-vampires-emerge-from-graves-in-medieval-polish-cemetery/#13b52a074958>

Jun 1, 2016 @ 09:14 AM

Kristina Killgrove

Contributor

As a bioarchaeologist, I routinely pore over the skeletons of ancient populations so that I can learn about their health, diet, and lifestyles. Most of my research focuses on understanding the ancient Romans whose lives didn't make it into history books. I did my PhD in anthropology and MA in classical archaeology. Follow me on Twitter or Google+. Contact me here.

The author is a Forbes contributor. The opinions expressed are those of the writer.



"Anti-vampire" grave 256/01 from Site 4 at Kaldus. The female (left) and male (right) were both decapitated and buried on their sides in the same grave. (Photo by Jacek Bojarski, courtesy of Wojciech Chudziak.)

Archaeologists excavating a Medieval cemetery site in Kaldus, Poland, recently discovered hundreds of graves — among them, they found 14 anti-vampire burials. Some of these people were decapitated, others buried face-down, and still more were weighted down with stones. One of the major theories about ancient “vampire” graves is that people buried in this way were unhealthy or disabled, causing their compatriots to treat them differently in death because of their physical differences in life. A team of researchers set out to investigate diseases apparent on the bones of these 14 so-called vampires.

The cemetery at the site — which was known as Culmen in Latin — saw its first burial at the end of the 10th century AD. Culmen eventually became one of several capitals of Poland in the Medieval period, but it was burned to the ground at the beginning of the 13th century by the Teutonic Knights. Over 1,000 graves were found in the cemetery, which was excavated by a team of archaeologists under the supervision of Wojciech Chudziak from Nicolaus Copernicus University, and 14 of them showed evidence of “anti-vampire”

practices.

Vampire graves have been of particular interest to archaeologists and the public recently because of their strange nature. The burial practices undertaken to “cure” vampirism include special attempts to prevent the deceased from roaming the earth: sickles around the neck, decapitation, prone burial, and heavy stones placed on the body. While some scholars call these “vampire” graves, referring to the supposed nature of the occupant, others call them



“anti-vampire” burial practices, referring to the burial treatment given to the person.

Current scholarship has identified three main reasons that Medieval Europeans may have buried their friends and family as if they were vampires. First, many diseases common at the time — like tuberculosis — could cause people to be pale and to emit blood. Second, before people understood how diseases are transmitted by germs, they thought that vampires were sickening their family members even after their deaths. And third, people may simply have feared those who looked or acted differently than normal.



“Anti-vampire” grave 26/00 from Site 4 at Kaldus. (Photo by Jacek Bojarski, courtesy of Wojciech Chudziak.)

After excavation, about half of the skeletons from Culmen were analyzed by archaeologists Magdalena Matczak and Tomasz Kozłowski, primarily to figure out which people were perceived as “vampires” and why. Matczak and Kozłowski investigated all skeletons from Culmen for evidence of any disease and presented their findings at the American Association of Physical Anthropologists conference in Atlanta in April.

Their research revealed that 238 skeletons — about half of the entire cemetery population — showed evidence of disease.

More importantly, there was a statistical correlation between those 14 “anti-vampire” graves and pathological lesions on the bones. “Most of the skeletons from anti-vampire burials,” Matczak and Kozłowski write, “have changes associated with scurvy, osteoperiostitis, degenerative lesions, and fractures.” Those are, they admit, fairly common afflictions, and most of the people with those diseases were given typical burials. Even people with slightly odd conditions like meningitis and trepanation (ancient skull surgery) were buried normally. As for the “vampires,” one showed evidence of scurvy, another was diagnosed with multiple myeloma (a cancer), and a third had severe degenerative joint disease.

While Matczak and Kozłowski were looking for correlations between “vampires” and physical issues that could explain their anomalous burial treatment, they did not find them. “Contrary to previous research,” they write, “our analysis showed that people with tuberculosis, anemia, and scurvy were not [necessarily] given anti-vampire burials.” Given the high rate of pathology within the Culmen population, it’s likely that diseases and disabilities were perceived as within the range of normal for this community and therefore “would not have raised anxiety, fear, or negative perception of diseased people as vampires.”

So why the odd burial, then? Matczak tells me that they don't yet know, as it's difficult to figure out from bones alone. It's possible they are people "who died suddenly without Christian sacraments, like unbaptized children, people who committed suicide, babies born with teeth, or newly postpartum mothers." But much more information is needed. "The problem of who and why certain people were regarded as vampires needs to be investigated further using an interdisciplinary approach," Matczak tells me. As more research is done on Medieval cemeteries in Europe, archaeologists will eventually be able to make sense of these strange vampire burials.

Kristina Killgrove is a bioarchaeologist at the University of West Florida. For more osteology news, follow her on Twitter (@DrKillgrove) or like her Facebook page Powered by Osteons.

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Horned husband accused of attacking wife with knife

PHOENIX (KPHO/KTVK) -

azfamily.com

Posted: Jun 01, 2016 1:37 PM PDT Updated: Jun 01, 2016 1:53 PM PDT



Juan Rodriguez (Source: Maricopa County Superior Court)

Juan Rodriguez (Source: Maricopa County Superior Court)

A Glendale man has been arrested for allegedly attacking his wife with a knife.

Juan Vargas Rodriguez, 53, is charged with felony aggravated assault with a deadly weapon.

According to the police report, officers responded to the 911 call of a woman who said she had been stabbed by her husband.

The victim detailed the argument with her husband that led up to the alleged assault.

The police report reads: "She got home late from work and they started to argue. He was jealous and thought she was cheating on him. He told her to sleep in the closet and she said no, she wanted to sleep in her bed."

The police report goes on to say: "When she exited the closet, he grabbed her by the throat and pushed her across the room. He pulled a large serrated knife from his waistband (approximately 8 inches in length) and held it in the air. While he had the knife in the air and his hand on her throat he said 'you're going to die, [expletive] and the victim thought he was going to kill her. He swung the knife with a wide straight right arm hook motion towards her."

The knife cut the top of her left forearm and inside of her bicep. The point of the knife also struck the side of her left breast.

Police say the wife tried to grab the knife to take it from Rodriguez with her right hand and got cut between her thumb and pointer finger.

Police say the victim fell back onto the bed and was screaming for help.

According to the police report, the suspect's adult daughter came in and pulled him off of the wife and took the knife away. The victim ran outside to call and wait for police.

Rodriguez, according to the police report, told detectives he didn't really remember what happened and he "kind of blacked out with rage." He later stated he didn't mean to cut his wife.

Rodriguez's next court date is set for June 6.

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Bizarre Poker Game Robbery Involved Suspect In Horse Mask, Wooden Paddle

cbslocal.com



CBS Denver

June 1, 2016 9:10 PM

By Tom Mustin

BOULDER, Colo. (CBS4) – Boulder police are investigating a bizarre home robbery. It involved a poker game, a man in a horse mask, and an armed accomplice.

David Bayless still feels violated after the violent robbery at his Boulder home.

"I'm mad more than shocked. How could someone do this?" Bayless asked CBS4's Tom Mustin.

Last Wednesday, Bayless had been hosting his weekly poker game for several of his friends.

"We have no profit. A social game. Fun, friendly social game," he said.

Around 11 p.m. his home surveillance camera captured a man barging into the home wearing a dark hoodie and a horse mask, and carrying a wooden paddle. Another man, armed with a gun, yelled for the players to put their hands up while the horse-masked man steals the pot of \$3,500.



(credit: Boulder Police Department)

"This is my house. Someone intruded my property," Bayless said.

He said his poker games have evolved from a small group of friends, to a larger game that includes some outsiders. He believes the crime was an inside job.

"They say, 'Wow, there's some money in this game. Do I hold up a 7-Eleven or do I hold up Dave's poker game?'"

The crime has shaken Bayless so much that he's postponed his poker games indefinitely. He also said he wasn't impressed by the crooks, especially after they left behind the wooden paddle.

"These guys are idiots. They're amateurs. Not professionals by any means."

And when it comes to catching the brazen thieves, Bayless is all in.

"So much want them caught I couldn't express it."



(credit: CBS)

The horse-masked suspect is described as being between 5-foot-6 and 5-foot-9 inches and weighs between 215 to 220 pounds.



(credit: CBS)



(credit: CBS)



(credit: Boulder Police Department)

Boulder Police say the gunman is described as a Hispanic male with short hair, between 5-foot-9 and 5-foot-11 and weighs 160 to 180 pounds.

Additional Information From The Boulder Police Department

Anyone who may have additional information on this case should call Detective Heather Frey at 303-441-3369. Those who have information but wish to remain anonymous may contact the Northern Colorado Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS (8477). Tips may also be submitted through the Crime Stoppers website at crimeshurl.com. Those submitting tips through Crime Stoppers that lead to the arrest and filing of charges on a suspect(s) may be eligible for a cash reward of up to \$1,000 from Crime Stoppers.

Tom Mustin is CBS4's Weekend Anchor. He has been with CBS4 since 2002, and is always looking for great story ideas. Connect with Tom on Facebook or follow him on Twitter @TomCBS4.

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WEEK IN WEIRD

Week In Weird



Home / Features /
The Successful
Séance: Houdini
May Have Spoken
From Beyond the
Grave, But No One
Bothered to Listen



successful-houdini-seance

The Houdini Séances are an American tradition dating back to 1926. Every Halloween, the anniversary of the magician's death, groups around the country gather together by candlelight in an attempt to summon the Great Escapist from beyond the grave. Each and every time, Houdini fails to show his ghostly face, the candles are blown out, and the seance is proclaimed unsuccessful. Or so we're told. What the skeptics conveniently leave out is that one such séance, performed just two years after the magician's death, proved so successful

that Houdini's wife issued a signed statement of its legitimacy to the press.

You would think that such a monumental occasion would be more of a focal point in the history of the world's most famous magician, but instead, the successful séance became the target of an organized attempt to rewrite history. Harry Houdini may have returned from the grave on January 8, 1929, only to be pushed right back in by unbelievers with an agenda.

THE MISSION: HARRY HOUDINI'S WAR ON SPIRITUALISM

Harry Houdini was never a believer, though he claimed he wanted to be. When his mother, Cecilia Weiss, died in 1913, her last word, "forgive", made a considerable impression on him. He began to visit a number of spirit mediums in an attempt to receive confirmation that his mother was still out there somewhere beyond the veil, but, the more séances he attended, the more Harry began to believe that all mediums were frauds taking advantage of the vulnerable. None of them repeated his mother's last word, and to him, this proved it was all a sham.

For the rest of his life, he used his talents as an illusionist to reveal the sneaky tricks used by unscrupulous mediums to dupe the grieving out of cash, and his mission gained a small, but impassioned following. At times, though, his quest to expose mediums became almost pathological, famously resulting in nasty spat with Mina "Margery" Crandon, a Boston Medium known as the "Blonde Witch of Lime Street".

When Houdini heard that *Scientific American* was about to endorse Margery after attending her séances, he flew into a rage, vowing to expose her, and after taking in just two of her performances, he did just that, catching the Blonde Witch ringing bells with her toes, lifting the séance table with her head, and other feats of misdirection that, as a magician, he almost admired. "The slickest ruse I ever detected," he said of her performance.

Released from a lamp like Aladdin's genie,
And disappears without a trace.

Walks the halls of the hospital Sinai-Grace,
His booming voice is forever muffled.
And disappears without a trace.
The mortal coil he has shuffled.

His booming voice is forever muffled,
Like the cards he once manipulated.
The mortal coil he has shuffled,
"I will return", he once stipulated.

Like the cards he once manipulated
Every year on all hollows eve,
"I will return", he once stipulated.
Vigil, though his spirit does not believe.

Every year on all hollows eve
Séances run by many a magician.
Vigil, even though they do not believe,
They continue this yearly tradition.

Séances run by many a magician.
The zero hour has come and gone.
They continue this yearly tradition,
Turn out the light, it's a new dawn.

The zero hour has come and gone;
Good night Harry, as they all close the door.
Turn out the light, it's a new dawn,
The Master Magician returns no more.

Good night Harry, as they all close the door
And disappears without a trace.
The Master Magician returns no more
To slowly walk the halls of Sinai-Grace.

• Ashley

02/02/2016 at 4:48 AM

This is a great poem! Did u write it yourself?

7. jamesrav

01/29/2016 at 8:44 PM

Very interesting and enjoyable article, even for a skeptic. However, the key point can be summed up briefly: a secret message ("Rosabelle believe") between ONLY two people – and one of them dead – is practically airtight. But that was apparently not the case here – she (or Houdini?) blabbed it at some point. At that juncture it's useless. So what was the situation when Ford told her the message? Two people and only two people knew the two words, or others knew it *precisely* as stated (case closed) or could logically infer it (which leaves a tiny bit of wiggle room). A pity it was not definitely kept secret, in which case the skeptics would have much to answer for.

8. JSM

01/29/2016 at 10:01 PM

A thorough write-up and well composed. Houdini's claim that, if there were a way to come back, he'd find it, is quite well known. Unfortunately, at least for this reader, the rest of the story was never told.

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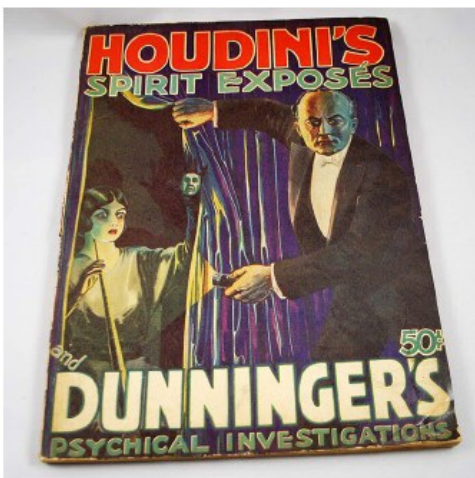


Mina "Margery" Crandon produces ectoplasm during a séance

When Houdini announced to the séance attendees that the game was rigged, Margery wasn't happy.. and neither was Walter, her spirit guide. "Houdini, you goddamned son of a bitch," Walter yelled. "I put a curse on you now that will follow you every day for the rest of your short life." This didn't deter the magician, and he took his exposé public, publishing pamphlets that described in detail exactly how Margery performed her "tricks".

Adding insult to injury, Houdini even launched a series of humorous stage performances that aimed to reproduce her séances. They proved to be a smash hit, and before long, Houdini didn't just have Margery's career in a death grip, he was strangling the entire Spiritualist movement,

complete with a laugh track as he choked the life from it.



houdini-s-spirit-expose-by-dunninger

But it was Walter, The Blonde Witch's vengeful spirit guide, who would have the last laugh. In August 1926, Margery was asked how she was dealing with all of the ridicule, and Walter answered for her: "Houdini will be dead within a year," he sneered.

Houdini died on October 31, 1926, a painful death from septic poisoning, the result of a ruptured appendix after taking a vicious punch to the stomach.

THE MEDIUM: INSTRUCTIONS FROM BEYOND

It didn't take long after Houdini's death for hundreds of mediums to come out of the woodwork, each claiming that they'd received messages from the magician. There was only one problem:

Harry Houdini had prepared for this situation, telling his wife, Bess, that should he ever return from the grave, he would speak

to her in a code only she would understand. This way she would know, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that it was really him reaching out from the afterlife and not the work of a huckster.



houdini-viewing

For the next year, Bess would lock herself in a dark room each Sunday afternoon, gaze upon a portrait of her late husband, and wait for a sign. A year went on, and when her own attempts couldn't bring forth the coded message, Bess took things a step further. Not only did she offer a \$10,000 bounty to any medium who could bring her the coded message, but on Halloween night, the anniversary of Harry Houdini's death, a séance would be conducted in an attempt to bring forth his spirit.

Behind the scenes, however, there were scores of private attempts to make contact with the Great Escapist. While none of them came close, one man named Arthur Ford, a pastor from the First Spiritualist Church in New York City, piqued the

interest of Bess Houdini. He claimed that on February 8, 1928, he had gone into one of his usual trances

in the company of a small group of friends, when an anxious spirit by the name of Cecilia approached. Ford claimed that it was none other than Houdini's mother, who had come to tell her son Harry to "forgive".



Spirit medium Arthur Ford, of the First Spiritualist Church

When Bess learned about Ford's alleged contact with Cecilia, she wasted no time writing to Ford:

Strange that the word *forgive* is the word Houdini awaited in vain all of his life. It was indeed the message for which he always secretly hoped, and if had been given to him while he was still alive, it would I know have changed the entire course of his life—but it came too late. Aside from this there are one or two trivial inaccuracies—Houdini's mother called him Ehrich—there

was nothing in the message which could be contradicted. I might also say that this is the first message which I have received which has an appearance of truth.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, an old friend of Houdini's and a staunch believer, called the message "an outstanding case" of contact with the other side, but skeptics had their issues. A year before, Bess had told the *Brooklyn Eagle* that any messages from a ghostly Houdini would have contained the word "forgive". Genuine contact or hoax, it was clear that Ford's message couldn't be counted as hard evidence, and in any case, Harry's true secret message still hadn't been received.

THE MESSAGE: ROSABELLE AND THE SECRET CODE

The following year, Ford and a handful of his congregation met Bess at her home on Payson Avenue in New York. He'd come to tell her what she'd been waiting to hear: Houdini had come through. Ford claimed that on the previous day, January 5, 1929, he'd been given the code words that would prove, once and for all, that the magician's spirit lived on past death.

"Rosabelle, answer, tell, pray-answer, look, tell, answer-answer, tell," was the message given.

Bess was stunned. It was, without a doubt, the coded message that her husband said he'd return with.

She immediately arranged for another séance to be conducted, and despite the skepticism of her close friends, that very same evening gave an interview to the *New York Times*, saying, "They are the exact words left for me by Harry, and I am absolutely convinced that my husband talked to me and that there is life beyond the grave."

THE CODE: A CLOSELY-GUARDED SECRET

In order to understand why the message was so important, we need to understand Houdini's code. Early on in their career, Harry and Bess performed a telepathy act together. As they spoke to one another on stage, it appeared to the crowd as innocent conversation, but in reality, they were using a carefully chosen selection of key words to silently communicate letters of the alphabet. The code worked as follows:

- Pray = 1 = A
- Answer = 2 = B
- Say = 3 = C

- Now = 4 = D
- Tell = 5 = E
- Please = 6 = F
- Speak = 7 = G
- Quickly = 8 = H
- Look = 9 = I
- Be quick = 10 or 0 = J

This code was a closely-guarded secret. No one, save for Houdini and his wife, knew the code, so when it appeared from the lips of a medium, Bess was left with no other option than to believe.

In their code, the message read: "Rosabelle, believe."

THE SEANCE: HARRY HOUDINI COMES THROUGH

At noon on January 8, Bess met with Arthur Ford and they proceeded with the planned séance, eager to speak with the spirit of the late magician. Ford went into a trance, and before long, was speaking through a voice he claimed to be Houdini's.



Harry Houdini and his wife Bess

"Rosabelle, sweet Rosabelle, believe!" said the voice. "Thank you, sweetheart, now take off your wedding ring and tell them what 'Rosabelle' means." Bess took off her ring and began to sing the lyrics to a song she had performed in one of her first shows with her late husband: "Rosabelle, sweet Rosabelle, I love you more than I can tell. Over me you cast a spell. I love you, my sweet Rosabelle."

The lyrics were inscribed inside her wedding ring, a fact that Houdini's alleged spirit shared with the crowd.

"Spare no time or money to undo my attitude of doubt while on earth," the spirit continued. "Now that I have found my way back, I can come often, sweetheart. Give yourself to placing the truth before all those who have

lost the faith and want to take hold again. Believe me, life is continuous. Tell the world there is no death. I will be close to you. I expect to use this instrument many times in the future. Tell the world, sweetheart, that Harry Houdini lives and will prove it a thousand times."

Bess was so convinced that she issued a signed statement to the press.

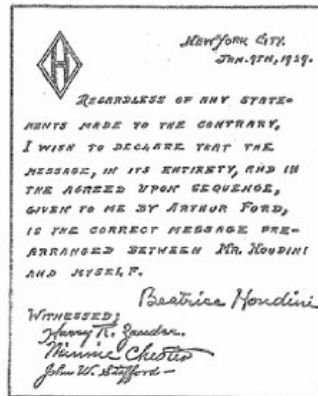
The statement was written on her own stationery and read:

"Regardless of any statements made to the contrary, I wish to declare that the message in its entirety and in the agreed-upon sequence, given to me by Arthur Ford is the correct message pre-arranged between Mr. Houdini and myself."

Bess was thrilled that her husband had finally come to prove there was life beyond death, but the same could not be said for the critics of Spiritualism. They were seething.

THE TABLOID: REA JAURE AND THE SCOOP OF A LIFETIME

It had only been two days since Bess and Ford had performed the successful séance, but already, the skeptics were at their throats. That day the headline of the *New York Evening Graphic*, a notorious tabloid, read in big bold letters: "HOUDINI MESSAGE A BIG HOAX! 'Séance' Prearranged by 'Medium' and Widow."



Facsimile of statement made by Mrs. Houdini the day after receipt of the message. Witnesses: Mr. H. T. Zander, Representative of the United Press, Mrs. Minnie Chester, life-long friend of Mrs. Houdini and Mr. John W. Stafford, Associate Editor of Scientific American.

beatrice-houdini-press-statement

The piece went on to allege that Bess had concocted an elaborate scheme, giving her late husband's secret code to Arthur Ford before the séance, and claimed the entire performance was arranged as a sly promotion for a lecture tour that the two were planning to embark on. Even more scandalous is that *Evening Graphic* reporter Rea Jaure claimed that she'd received the scoop from Ford himself. According to Jaure, Ford had admitted that he'd actually paid Bess for the secret cipher.

Joseph Dunninger, one of Houdini's old colleagues, reportedly visited Bess following the séance to stress that he believed the entire thing to be a ruse on Ford's part. Despite Bess' insistence that she believed the message, Dunninger pointed out that the "secret code" wasn't so secret anymore. A year earlier Harold Kellock had published their cipher in *Houdini, His Life Story*, a biography authorized and written with documents provided by Bess. Dunninger then reminded the press of this

fact, and the public, and so on and so forth.

Bess refuted the claims of fraud, but it was too late, the damage was done. The public was outraged, and as far as they were concerned, Arthur Ford was a conman, Bess Houdini was hungry for the spotlight, and Houdini was deadlier than a doorknob.

In the years that followed, Bess recanted her statements, saying that she never truly believed that she'd ever made contact with Harry's spirit. In the eyes of the world, the matter of Houdini's afterlife was resolved, and it's here that the narrative has come to an end for nearly a century since.

But should it?

THE SUPPRESSED EVIDENCE: CASUALTIES OF WAR



Bess Houdini seance

In the beginning, there's no reason to doubt that the attempts at making contact with the spirit of Harry Houdini were genuine, at least when it comes to the intentions of Bess. For an entire year, she tried in vain to contact her husband on her own before resorting to the famous Halloween séances. Even those, as far as we know, were less than successful.

By the time Arthur Ford entered the picture, things were murkier. By all accounts, Bess quickly

found herself between a rock and a hard place. Those who had followed Houdini's work debunking mediums were furious that his wife was in a position to potentially damage her husband's message. Meanwhile, Spiritualists had discovered an opening in which they could push their own agenda.

Bess was, at first, an innocent bystander in a war that has been raging since the beginning of time: Skeptics vs. Believers. The Skeptics would have you think they won this battle by "proving" that Houdini never returned, and by all accounts, they probably did win. Today, Spiritualism is all but dead save for a handful of small communities like **Cassadaga, Florida** and **Lily Dale, New York**, and as far as Houdini

is concerned, history now believes that the only “successful” Houdini séance was a hoax. But for those who look closer, the answer isn’t nearly as clear.

Since the Great Magician hit the dirt in 1926, there’s been a move to push only one side of the story, with complete disregard for any evidence of the contrary. Take, for instance, the sincere plea that Bess Houdini wrote to the *New York Evening Graphic* days after Rea Jaure accused her of rigging the séance.

This letter is not for publicity, I do not need publicity. I want to let Houdini’s old friends know that I did not betray his trust. I am writing this personally because I wish to tell you emphatically that I was no party to any fraud.

Now regarding the séance: For two years I have been praying to receive the message from my husband; for two years every day I have received messages from all parts of the world. Had I wanted a publicity stunt I could no doubt have chosen any of these sensational messages. When I repudiated these messages no one said a word, excepting the writers who said I did not have the nerve to admit the truth.

When the real message, *the* message that Houdini and I agreed upon, came to me and I accepted it as the truth, I was greeted with jeers. Why? Those who denounce the whole thing as a fraud claim that I had given Mr. Arthur Ford the message. If Mr. Ford said this I brand him a liar. Mr. Ford has stoutly denied saying this ugly thing, and knowing the reporter as well as I do I prefer to believe Mr. Ford. Others say the message has been common property and known to them for some time. Why do they tell me this now, when they know my heart was hungry for the true words from my husband? The many stories told about me I have no way to tell the world the truth of or the untruth, for I have no paper at my beck and call; everyone has a different opinion of how the message was obtained. With all these different tales I would not even argue. However, when anyone accuses me of *giving* the words that my husband and I labored so long to convince ourselves of the truth of communication, then I will fight and fight until the breath leaves my body.

If anyone claims I gave the code, I can only repeat they lie. Why should I want to cheat myself? I do not need publicity. I have no intention of going on the stage or, as some paper said, on a lecture tour. My husband made it possible for me to live in the greatest comfort. I do not need to earn money. I have gotten the message I have been waiting for from my husband, how, if not by spiritual aid, I do not know.

And now, after I told the world that I have received the true message, everyone seems to have known of the code, yet never told me. They left it to Mr. Ford to tell me, and I am accused of giving the words. It is all so confusing. In conclusion, may I say that God and Houdini and I know that I did not betray my trust. For the rest of the world I really ought not to care a hang, but somehow I do, therefore this letter. Forgive its length.

Sincerely yours,

Beatrice Houdini

It’s hard not to feel sorry for her as she relates her frustrations with the disbelief she’s come up against. All of her skeptical friends seemed to have already known the secret code, but strangely, chose not to reveal it until Bess had come under scrutiny. Some friends they were.

Sure, it sounds pretty convenient, but hey, we all know that Arthur Ford purchased the code from Bess after being outed by the *New York Evening Graphic* reporter, right?

Wrong. Ignoring the fact that it would have been obvious career suicide for him to tell a newspaper reporter that he was a fraud, Ford never even met with Rea Jaure. In fact, Ford’s lawyer presented three

witnesses who could all vouch that he was in another part of town when the interview allegedly occurred.



Arthur Ford with Bess Houdini in 1929

But wait, even if Ford didn't pay for the cipher, and never met with Rea Juare, the secret code had already been published in Harold Kellock's Houdini biography anyway, so he could have used it to figure out the secret, right?

Wrong again. Despite what Joseph Dunninger would have the world believe, those who actually bothered to read the book in question would find that the section dealing with their code was not only incredibly brief, but not nearly descriptive enough to have provided the ten word answer necessary to meet Harry and Bess' previously-arranged criteria.

Also suspicious is the fact that Bess never paid out the \$10,000 prize she owed to Arthur Ford. When *The New York Times* inquired as to why, Bess claimed that the offer was withdrawn before the séance on the advice of some kindly Spiritualists. They, she said, wanted the motivations behind their work to be free from that of monetary gain.

If the unscrupulous Spiritualists were really out to empty the wallets of grieving widows, as so many of its critics had claimed, surely they'd have gone for the big score – ten grand was a lot of money in those days.

The deeper you dig, the more you find that in the aftermath of the infamous séance, the whole truth was never allowed to surface.

THE GHOST REBUKED: HOUDINI'S SPIRIT DISSIPATES



Harry Houdini

In the year that followed, Arthur Ford was kicked out of the United Spiritualist League of New York, a direct result of Bess Houdini recanting her statements. In spite of the enthusiastic interviews she had given the press and the signed statement issued on her own stationary, she now claimed that she had never once believed she was speaking to her dead husband. On March 19, 1930, Bernard M.L. Ernst, Houdini's lawyer, issued the following statement to the press:

"For three years she had sought to penetrate beyond the grave and communicate with her husband, but had now renounced faith in such a possibility: she denied that any of the mediums presented the clew [clue] by which she was to recognize a legitimate message."

It doesn't take a skilled magician to see that smoke and mirrors were in play, and within a short time, the United Spiritualist League saw through the illusion as well, finding no evidence of wrongdoing on the part

of Arthur Ford, and reinstated his membership.

Despite her new stance, Bess continued to hold her yearly séance for four more years, with the “final” séance held atop the Knickerbocker Hotel in Hollywood. Of the event, she issued a statement:

“Now that Houdini, Carter and Thurston have joined forces on the other side of the grave, I am going to make, here in Hollywood, the one supreme effort to contact these great magicians and maybe together one of them may ‘come through’.”

It was a huge ordeal, drawing large crowds and even producing an LP of the event (which, for what it’s worth, was likely recorded in a studio after the fact). It was such a smash hit, that in reality, the official séance would continue indefinitely, handed off by Bess to her trusted friends to perform every year to this very day.

Why, if she had “renounced faith in such a possibility”, would she have continued her attempts at contact?

If you were so inclined, you could easily come to the conclusion that Bess was coerced into disavowing the earlier messages, likely out of a need to distance herself from the death rattle of Spiritualism, or possibly because there’s more to gain from continued *attempts* at contact with Harry than a single successful one. On that point alone, it’s worth noting that Bess kept a publicist on her payroll for sixteen years after her husband’s death.

Bess Houdini died on February 11, 1943. Presumably, no one has tried to contact her.

Regardless of where you fall on the scale of belief, it’s easy to see that the conditions surrounding the Houdini séance were never anything but a complete mess. With both sides pushing and pulling Bess to represent their own best interests, anyone who claims to know the truth about the séance is either misinformed or purposefully disingenuous. The fact is, there is every reason to believe that there **was a chance**, however minuscule, that the ghostly spirit of Harry Houdini had successfully manifested in that room on January 8, 1929.

Ready for the worst part? If Houdini truly did pull off the greatest performance of his career, clawing his way back to proclaim life beyond the grave, then we have to accept that he was bullied right back into the afterlife by the very people who he’d trained to disbelieve. And you know what they say about magicians: the good ones never perform the same trick twice.

What do you think? Did the ghost of Harry Houdini manage to come back to give a final message to his beloved Rosabelle? Or was the entire thing just one big hoax? We want to hear your side. **Make contact on Twitter @WeirdHQ, reach out on Facebook**, or summon up a conversation in the comments below!

10 Comments

1. David Andrews

01/27/2016 at 1:26 PM

This article was fantastic. Very interesting stuff that I had never heard before, but it’s obvious now that there was an agenda behind that. Someone should do a seance with the intent to contact Bess Houdini and find out what REALLY happened!

2. Shannon

01/27/2016 at 3:16 PM

Very well done and interesting article. Houdini remains so many years after his passing a fascinating individual and this was well-written and researched.

3. AliceinHundyLand

01/27/2016 at 9:31 PM

This was fascinating. I'm not exactly convinced that Houdini came back but you've provided enough of an argument that I not doubt the "official" story. Nice work.

4. Malcolm Robinson

01/28/2016 at 12:09 PM

Great article. I firmly believe that the spirit of Harry Houdini came back. Such a shame that Bess recounted her testimony. For me life after earth is a fact and this article helps secure that faith.

5. Bob B.

01/28/2016 at 1:21 PM

QUOTE: "Spiritualism is all but dead save for a handful of small communities like Cassadaga, Florida and Lily Dale, New York."

-Hardly. I believe every medium-to-large sized city in North America has one or more spiritualist churches active. I've attended a few in the past, have been read by mediums there myself, and was impressed by their apparent abilities with regard to my own personal situation.

There's been a significant revival of spiritualism in recent decades via high profile mediums repeatedly seen & heard on TV and radio, sometimes having their own TV shows, or being regular guests on others' shows: James von Praagh, John Edwards, Kenny Kingston, Sylvia Brown, to name a few American ones. Britain has its own current famous mediums. In Brazil, belief in and practice of spiritualism is ubiquitous. There, it's not a minority belief, it's one of the most mainstream religious beliefs there is.

The Houdini example's interesting, but the truth or falsehood of spiritualism hardly hinges on whether Houdini "came through" or not. Prof. Gary Schwartz of the U. of Arizona conducted a number of double and triple blind experiments testing the supposed abilities of spirit mediums. He published his findings in the book "The Afterlife Experiments." The evidence of his studies suggest some mediums have genuine abilities as they claim to have.

• Greg Newkirk

01/28/2016 at 1:29 PM

I was talking about the Spiritualist religion (with a big S), not the belief that one can speak to the dead. That's always been huge, despite the ebb and flow of cultural shifts. Maybe I should have been more specific.

6. Michael Pascoe

01/29/2016 at 2:32 AM

The Ghost of Houdini
by Michael Pascoe

The ghost of magician Harry Houdini
Walks the halls of the hospital Sinai-Grace.

Houston mom pursued big rig after road rage crash

HOUSTON (KTRK) --

abc13.com



Woman sideswiped by big rig

A woman says she was intentionally sideswiped by a big rig this morning. Deborah Wrigley reports. (KTRK) Friday, May 20, 2016 12:00PM

A big rig driver is under arrest after a chase in northeast Houston this morning. The person who pursued him not a police office, but a petite 20-year-old mom.

"I pulled in front of the truck at a stop light on Wallisville," said Desiree Tamez. "Another driver let me in but I guess the guy in the truck didn't like it."

Apparently not.

Tamez said the 18-wheeler driver honked at her. When he pulled beside her compact sedan, that's when it took a serious turn.



Mom sideswiped by big rig

"I saw my life flash in front of my eyes," she said. "I saw my daughter's life flash in front of my eyes." Her daughter, not yet two years old, was in her car seat in the back seat, watching cartoons.

The truck side-swiped the car, tearing off the side mirror and denting the vehicle, and the truck kept going.

Tamez said the truck had no license plate, so she followed. She said, "I didn't speed, I kept at a distance and I called 911."

Houston police were notified, and after winding on and beside the north and east loop, the truck driver was pulled over at 610 and McCarty.

The driver was in the back seat of a patrol car, in custody. Tamez stood by her damaged car. Her daughter had been picked up by her grandmother.

Tamez's boss came to the scene as well. She began working for the staffing company six months ago. "She has to deal with stressful situations," he said. "So she handled this great."

Tamez said she never yelled, and didn't let her anger get the better of her. She said, "I just didn't want him to get away with what he did."

The driver was arrested for failure to stop and give information. A representative of the company that owns the big rig would not comment on the incident.

The moral to the story? "Don't mess with a mom with their child in the car," she said.

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This is how David Copperfield made his audience 'disappear'

nypost.com

<http://nypost.com/2016/06/06/this-is-how-david-copperfield-pulled-off-vanishing-audience-trick/>

By Annabel Howard, The Sun

June 6, 2016 9:23am

David Copperfield is one of the most famous and wealthiest magicians in the entire world.
Photo: Getty Images

Originally Published By:



A British tourist has claimed his holiday turned into a nightmare when a magic trick by David Copperfield left him brain-damaged.

Gavin Cox flew to Las Vegas with his wife, Minh, for his birthday and to see the world-famous magician at the MGM Hotel and Casino.

The 55-year-old was then chosen by Copperfield to take part in an illusion in which 13 fans “vanish” from inside a suspended cage on stage — only to “miraculously” reappear moments later at the back of the theater.

Instead of being a magical night, a series of blunders led to a three-year legal wrangle which has allowed Cox to reveal the magician’s techniques in unprecedented detail.

The court documents in a claim for millions of dollars against Copperfield and the hotel have shed light on the smoke-and-mirrors world of magic.

In November 2013, Cox approached the stage to join 12 other audience volunteers after he was quizzed by a member of Copperfield’s team.

He was asked if he was a magician, a member of the press and if he could run.



Modal Trigger

Once on stage, the 6-foot-4 chef was seated in a suspended cage with the rest of the group and all were given torches to hold.

He said: “A curtain comes down over the box and torchlight shines out to give the impression we are still in there.”

But he said in reality, “all hell broke loose” once the curtain came down and the magician’s

Copperfield’s “disappearing audience” trick isn’t nearly as magical as it seems. Photo: Getty Images

backstage team hurried the group down a pitch-black secret passage, through a door and outside into the open air.

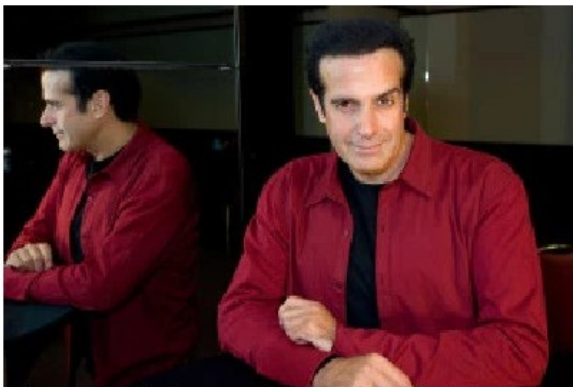
"It was like a fire alarm went off. They were saying 'hurry, run, run, run.' It was total pandemonium," he said.

Hands were pushing the fans on the back as they moved them through the dark corridor. Then, as Cox turned a corner, his feet slipped from underneath him and he smashed into the floor.

He added: "You don't know where you are going."

Copperfield "failed to prevent, inspect, maintain and warn of dangerous conditions" in the accident, which left him permanently brain-damaged, his lawyers alleged in the legal battle.

And his lawsuit also claimed the magician and the hotel failed to "devise a trick that would be safe for audience participants."



Copperfield's lawyers claim that Cox's injuries are a result of pre-existing medical conditions. Photo: WireImage

Modal Trigger

But Copperfield's lawyers have said "multiple inspections" were made of the area before the show.

The claim states: "During the trick plaintiff [Cox] was injured when he was hurried with no guidance or interaction through a dark area under construction with cement dust and debris, causing him to slip and fall."

Cox said on Saturday: "Seeing David Copperfield was the highlight of a dream trip to celebrate my 53rd birthday. Instead, it turned into a nightmare. My health has been wrecked, and I've lost my business and my life savings."

Cox and his wife are seeking punitive damages from Copperfield and MGM for alleged negligence.

The magician and the hotel vehemently deny the claims, saying the injuries were caused by "pre-existing and/or unrelated medical conditions."

Immediately after the trick, an ambulance took Cox to the hospital, where his right shoulder was found to be dislocated — but scans later revealed the former Copperfield fan was left with lesions on the brain.

He is now forced to wear an oxygen "lung" at night because he stops breathing, and he spent three months in a California brain trauma center.

The couple claims they have been forced to live in the US for nearly three years as the case

drags on and Cox's condition means he has not been able to work since.



Copperfield performs in Germany in 2005. Photo: Getty Images

Modal Trigger

Cox's career had once included years as a chef at London's Buck's Club, where he cooked for the Queen Mother, Margaret Thatcher and "Dracula" actor Christopher Lee, and running a guesthouse in Broadstairs, Kent.

But now their lifestyle could not be more different from Copperfield's, whose talents have earned him an \$800 million fortune, including palatial homes in Nevada and California, and a string of

11 private islands in the Bahamas known as Copperfield Bay.

Cox added: "We are too broke to go out and Gavin's injuries prevent us from enjoying a normal life.

"Gavin once cooked for royalty but now he can't even bake a muffin because he has nerve damage in his hands and no sense of smell."

Their 11-year-old son, Harry, has remained in the UK, cared for by the couple's oldest son Oliver, 25. The Coxes were forced to sell their guesthouse for \$740,000 at the end of 2014 and have been living off their savings.

A recent date for mediation was pushed back after the magician's lawyers said they needed to travel to the UK to question Cox's sons and British doctors under oath.

Copperfield's legal team claim Cox could have received the care he needed in the UK, saying: "The claim that they were forced to seek treatment in Las Vegas and are now trapped here is not true."

A trial date for the case has been set for January 2017.

On Saturday night, Copperfield's lawyers said: "This illusion has been performed for more than 15 years and with more than 100,000 participants. The history of the show speaks for itself. We deny all allegations. Unfortunately, we cannot comment further due to ongoing litigation."

This article originally appeared on The Sun.

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City Mortality.

WEEKLY REPORT OF DEATHS in the City and County of New-York, from the 22d day of September to the 29th day of September, 1855: Men, 50; women, 57; boys, 131; girls, 117; adults, 107; children, 248. Males, 181; females, 174; colored persons, 8—Total, 355.

DISEASES.

Abscess Lungs... 1	Diarrhoea 21	Inflam. of stom'h 1
Abscess Psoas... 1	Dropsy 2	Inflam. of throat. 1
Amputation, &c... 1	Dropsy in chest. 1	Killed or murther-
Apoplexy 3	Dropsy in head.. 9	ed by shooting. 1
Asphyxia 1	Drowned 1	Liver, disease of 1
Asthma 1	Dysentery 20	Liver and womb,
Bleeding, bowels 1	Enlargement of	disease of 1
Bleeding, lungs. 4	heart 1	Malform'n, head 1
Bleeding, womb. 1	Epilepsy 1	Malform'n, spine 1
Brain, disease of. 1	Fever, bilious... 1	Marasmus, adult 1
Bronchitis 4	Fever, intermit't 1	Marasmus, inf'le 35
Bu. ned or cal'd'd 1	Fever, Panama or	Old age 1
Cancer 3	Chagres 1	Palsy 2
Cancer stomach. 1	Fever, remittent. 8	Palsy from a fall 1
Cancer of womb. 1	Fever, scarlet... 8	Pleurisy 1
Casualties run	Fever, typhoid... 5	Premature birth. 5
over 1	Fever, typhus... 6	Rheumatism 1
Cholera infant'm 25	Fever, yellow... 1	Scrofula 1
Colic 1	Fracture of skull 1	Scurvy 1
Congest'n, brain. 5	Gravel 1	Softening stom'ch 1
Congest'n, lungs. 5	Heart, disease of. 3	Spine, disease of 1
Consumption . . . 38	Hip disease of... 1	Sprue 1
Convul's, adult.. 1	Hooping cough... 11	Stillborn 26
Convul's, inf'le. 31	Hydrophobia . . . 1	Stricture of gullet 1
Croup 8	Inflam. of bowels. 4	Suicide by arsenic 1
Debility adult... 1	Inflam. of brain.. 9	Teething 2
Debility, infan'le. 4	Inflam. of lungs 8	Tumor of womb. 1
Total		355

RECAPITULATION—DISEASES CLASSED.

Bones, joints &c 4	Skin, &c., and eruptive fe-
Brain and nerves 69	vers 8
Generative organs 4	Stillborn, and prem. birth.. 31
Heart and blood-vessels... 4	Stomach, bowels, and oth-
Lungs, Throat, &c 95	er digestive organs 120
Old Age 1	Uncertain seat and gene-
	ral fevers 29
Total	355

AGES.—Under 1 year, 135; 1 to 2 years, 69; 2 to 5 years, 27; 5 to 10 years, 5; 10 to 15 years, 6; 15 to 20 years, 4; 20 to 25 years, 10; 25 to 30 years, 14; 30 to 40 years, 27; 40 to 50 years, 22; 50 to 60 years, 15; 60 to 70 years, 10; 70 to 80 years, 5; 80 to 90 years, 2; Unknown 4—Total, 355.

[NATIVITIES.—England, 7; France, 2; Germany, 21; Ireland, 50; Scotland, 1; Switzerland, 1; United States, 273—Total, 355.

PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS.—Bellevue Hospital, 3; City Hospital, 3; Colored Home Hospital, 2; Penitentiary Hospital, Blackwell's Island, 1; Ward's Island Emigrant Hospital, 12; Work House, Blackwell's Island, 1—Total, 22.

Wards.	Wards.	Wards.
I 14	X 16	XVIII 16
II 2	XI 23	XIX (includes
III 4	XII (incl'des Ran-	Blackwell's
IV 12	dall's & Ward's	Island) 19
V (includes City	Islands 27	XX 29
Hospital) 13	XIII 20	XXI (includes
VI 17	XIV 14	Bellevue Hos-
VII 19	XV 10	pital) 14
VIII 15	XVI 11	XXII 24
IX 12	XVII 24	
Total		355

THOMAS K. DOWNING, City Inspector.

CITY INSPECTOR'S OFFICE, New-York, Sept. 27, 1855.

Hydro workers coax baby bear down from electrical pole

upi.com

http://www.upi.com/Odd_News/2016/06/03/Hydro-workers-coax-baby-bear-down-from-electrical-pole/2881464973738/?spt=sec&or=on

By Daniel Uria | June 3, 2016 at 1:51 PM

Follow @oddnewsupi



Hydro crews in British Columbia, Canada helped coax a frightened baby bear down from a 50-foot electrical pole. The crews de-energized the pole as a worker used a lift to reach the bear and prod it down using a long pole. Screen capture/BC Hydro/Twitter

PORT HARDY, British Columbia, June 3 (UPI) -- A baby bear in Canada was able to safely climb down from an electrical pole with the help of a crew of British Columbia Hydro workers.

BC Hydro shared video of the rescue in Port Hardy on Twitter, showing an employee reaching out from a lift and using a pole to gently prod the bear and guide it back to the ground.

The bear becomes too nervous to climb at several moments throughout the 30-second video but eventually made its way down from the 50-foot-high electrical pole with some encouragement from the Hydro workers.

According to the tweet, the Hydro crew de-energized the pole before attempting the rescue to ensure the safety of both the bear and the worker.

Watch our crews safely coax a bear cub down 50-ft pole after de-energizing the line in #PortHardy last Saturday. pic.twitter.com/gdjkR4JCfr

— BC Hydro (@bchydro) June 3, 2016

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Ice age bison fossils shed light on early human migrations

Posted on June 6, 2016



Scientists using evidence from bison fossils have determined when an ice-free corridor opened up along the Rocky Mountains during the late Pleistocene. The corridor has been considered a potential route for human and animal migrations between the far north (Alaska and Yukon) and the rest of North America, but when and how it was used has long been uncertain.

The researchers combined radiocarbon dating and DNA analysis to track the movements of bison into the corridor, showing that it was fully open by about 13,000 years ago. Their findings, published in *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, indicate that the corridor could not account for the initial dispersal of humans south of the ice sheets, but could have been used for later movements of people and animals, both northward and southward.

Rocky Mountains corridor

In the 1970s, geological studies suggested that the corridor might have been the pathway for the first movement of humans southward from Alaska to colonize the rest of the Americas. More recent evidence, however, indicated that the Cordilleran and Laurentide ice sheets coalesced at the height of the last ice age, around 21,000 years ago, closing the corridor much earlier than any evidence of humans south of the ice sheets. The initial southward movement of people into the Americas more than 15,000 years ago now seems likely to have been via a Pacific coastal route, but the Rocky Mountains corridor has remained of interest as a potential route for later migrations.

"The opening of the corridor provided new opportunities for migration and the exchange of ideas between people living north and south of the ice sheets," said first author Peter Heintzman, a postdoctoral researcher at UC Santa Cruz who led the DNA analysis.

Previous work by coauthor Beth Shapiro, professor of ecology and evolutionary biology at UC Santa Cruz, had shown that the bison populations north and south of the ice sheets were genetically distinct by the time the corridor opened. By analyzing bison fossils from within the corridor region, the researchers were able to track the movement of northern bison southward into the corridor and southern bison northward.

Genetic analysis key

"The radiocarbon dates told us how old the fossils were, but the key thing was the genetic analysis,

because that told us when bison from the northern and southern populations were able to meet within the corridor," Heintzman said.

The results showed that the southern part of the corridor opened first, allowing southern bison to start moving northward as early as 13,400 years ago, before the corridor fully opened. Later, there was some movement of northern bison southward, with the two populations overlapping in the corridor by 13,000 years ago.

"Bison fossils are the most widespread Quaternary mammal in western North America and of interest because they survived the extinctions at the end of the Pleistocene, unlike most other North American large mammals," said coauthor Duane Froese of the University of Alberta. "We were able to sample bison fossils, largely from museum collections, including critical ones from central Alberta that dated to the initial opening of the corridor."

According to Shapiro, archeological evidence suggests that human migration within the corridor was mostly from south to north. Sites associated with the Clovis hunting culture and its distinctive fluted point technology were widespread south of the corridor around 13,000 years ago and decline in abundance from south to north within the corridor region. A Clovis site in Alaska has been dated to no earlier than 12,400 years ago.

"When the corridor opened, people were already living south of there. And because those people were bison hunters, we can assume they would have followed the bison as they moved north into the corridor," Shapiro said.

The steppe bison of the Pleistocene (*Bison priscus*) were much bigger than modern bison (*Bison bison*), she said. Before the corridor closed, prior to the last glacial maximum, they moved freely up and down between the ice-free regions in the north and grasslands south of the ice sheets. After the ice sheets coalesced, the population that was cut off to the south contracted, leaving one genetically distinct southern lineage.

The DNA analysis used in this study focused on mitochondrial DNA, which is easier to recover from fossils than the DNA in chromosomes, because each cell has thousands of copies of the relatively short mitochondrial DNA sequence. While Shapiro's lab led the DNA analyses, Froese's lab led the radiocarbon dating work.



Many of the fossils they analyzed came from collections at the Royal Alberta Museum in Edmonton and other institutions. *"Thousands of steppe bison fossils are recovered in northern Canada every year,"* said coauthor Grant Zazula of the Government of Yukon Palaeontology Program in Whitehorse. *"Most of these fossils are uncovered by mining or gravel pit operators and later made available to scientists for study. These results speak to the importance of collecting and preserving fossils in order to better understand our history."*

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I'm Sorry for Helping Make Kale Cool

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thedailybeast.com

<http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2016/05/29/i-helped-make-kale-cool-and-i-regret-it.html>

GREEN MONSTER

05.28.16 9:15 PM ET

The leafy green is tough, bitter, and completely unsuited for salads, brownies, pizza and most else. It's the triumph of cool over taste.

Color it green, black, brown, blue, purple, white, or red.

Call it braunkohl, cavolo nero or riccio, chou frisé, borecole, colewort, yuyi ganlan or *brassica oleracea acephala*.

In any color and by any name, I know and hate kale when I see it—and these days I see it everywhere: like scorched bits of burned paper atop pizzas, muffled into pesto as a dusty, bitter blanket over pasta and risotto, studded like flecks of parchment into brownies and cookies, muddying up the cool elegance of ice creams and sorbets. Recently a food article in the *New York Times* buried Caesar by suggesting that kale be tossed in with the supple romaine lettuce that is the classic standard for this gently piquant salad. Like equally ubiquitous roasted (a.k.a. burned) carrots and beets and bronzy quinoa, kale on a menu tells gourmet wannabes that they are dining on the cutting edge.

All of which is why for the past couple of years, I have waged a one-woman anti-kale campaign. Granted kale is high in fiber, low in calories, rich in vitamins A and C and minerals, but so are many other delicious foods, including all of the lovely cabbages, broccoli, kohlrabi, romanesco and cauliflower, members of that have far more delicate, nuanced flavors and textures enabling them to compliment many other foods as salads, sauces and side dishes. All are members of the same brassica family, of which kale surely must be the black sheep.

Imagine then my chagrin a few weeks ago when my son reminded me that a long time ago I wrote a paean to kale, suggesting it in several preparations as an antidote to cold winter nights. He recalled it because when the article appeared in 1976 he was a kid in elementary school and was teased by classmates for being quoted with the opinion that kale tasted like "industrial strength broccoli."

Digging out that 40-year-old article and reading through it, I realized why I liked kale then and cannot stand it now: It's not the kale that's at fault, it's the cooks who now serve it raw, grilled, roasted, toasted, dried, so that it has the texture of broken ceramic chips.

In the olden days of my Brooklyn childhood, kale was strictly a winter vegetable and the only one greengrocers left outdoors on stands where the gray-green leaves became etched with icy hoar frost and white rivulets of snow. Reason was that kale, always considered tough,

benefitted from freezing, as the frozen cell walls would expand and break, thereby tenderizing the fibrous stalks before cooking.

Then, trimmed of their spines, the leaves were slow-simmered, always with some sort of fat, whether from meat (salt pork or ham hocks in the southern soul food way) or with garlic and olive oil in Italy, or peanut oil, garlic and ginger in China, or in the nurturing Portuguese soup, caldo verde, which becomes creamy as potatoes cook down with the kale. In northern Germany, much-loved braunkohl is simmered with pinkelwurst, a softly fatty pork sausage plumped with gritty buckwheat groats (kasha to many), sliced onions and enlivenings of black pepper. For an even richer and more flavorful result, North Europeans may first saute the kale in goose, duck or chicken fat or butter before steaming in a little water or, preferably, stock.

All of which proves, if indeed it needs proving, that fashionable innovation is not always an improvement and that succeeding generations hold to different benchmarks. Taste, after all, implies opinion so it is always wise to ask, "Compared to what?"

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Woman dies after being impaled by flying beach umbrella at Virginia Beach | Fox News

foxnews.com

Published June 09, 2016
FoxNews.com

A woman celebrating her 55th birthday at Virginia Beach died Wednesday after she was impaled by a windblown beach umbrella, police told FoxNews.com.

Virginia Beach police said the umbrella was anchored in the sand when a strong gust of wind carried it, hitting the 55-year-old woman from the town of Chester. WKTR.com identified the woman as Lottie Belk.

Workers of Sunrise Beach Service tell me it was 1 of these umbrellas that struck/killed woman yday on beach @WTKR3 pic.twitter.com/uwaHB0oEWE

— Stefania Okoliè (@StefaniaOkolie) June 9, 2016

Emergency crews responded after receiving a 911 call at about 5 p.m. regarding a woman in cardiac arrest. The woman was impaled in the torso, Tonya Pierce, the police spokeswoman, said.

When medics arrived, they found the woman with a life-threatening injury. The woman was taken to a hospital, where she died.

One witness told WKTR.com that the gusting winds during the incident were reminiscent of the tornado scene in "The Wizard of Oz."

FoxNews.com' Edmund DeMarche and The Associated Press contributed to this report.

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'The harm she caused is indescribable'

thewhig.com

**'The harm she caused is indescribable'**

By Sue Yanagisawa, Kingston Whig-Standard

Wednesday, June 1, 2016 3:20:55 EDT PM

The intermittent sounds of people sobbing softly punctuated the first half of the first day of a sentencing hearing Tuesday for a 29-year-old registered nurse who, for two and a half years, stole the pain medications of her dying patients.

Some of those sounds emanated from Laura Denouden, sitting in the front row behind her lawyer, listening to four people who opted to read their victim impact statements aloud to her and the judge.

An opiate addict, Denouden worked in the Palliative Care Unit at St. Mary's of the Lake Hospital until June 2015: She was fired after her crimes came to light.

Her lawyer, Mark Ertel, disclosed that her Ontario Nurses Association local has initiated a grievance over her termination, however, and a hearing is set for this fall. He also told Justice Larry O'Brien that his client is under review by the College of Nurses, which currently deems her unfit to work: She's been given a diagnosis of opiate dependence disorder.

Ertel said he expects Denouden will be allowed to resume her nursing career, "with certain restrictions," however, after a report on the steps she's taken since arrest is completed in about six weeks.

This April she pleaded guilty in Kingston's Ontario Court of Justice to five crimes deriving from her drug seeking at the hospital between January 2013 and June 2015. They are: the theft of syringes, saline and vials of hydromorphone, a morphine derivative used in the management of severe pain; mischief by tampering with drug vials to hide her theft of their contents; forgery of patient records, also to cover up her thefts of pain medications; breaking and entering involving her unauthorized accessing of the palliative care medications room; and illegal possession of hydromorphone.

No one knows how many or who among the dying were given drugs, diluted by Denouden to the point of ineffectiveness, or had individual dosages diverted to her personal use, or depleted by her siphoning from the cartridges in their computerized ambulatory drug delivery (CAD) pumps, even while they were in use.

But a common thread among the 15 people who submitted victim impact statements to Justice O'Brien is the belief that their loved ones may have been victims — and the pain of that uncertainty.

There could be many more than 15. Defence lawyer Ertel told the judge he hadn't expected so many impact statements or so many spectators in the courtroom for his client's sentencing hearing. The room, which can hold 80 to 100 people, was about two-thirds full.

The four who read their statements aloud all spoke of watching family members end their days in suffering, unrelieved by the drugs they received.

One told the judge her father asked only: "Keep me comfortable; I don't want to be in pain." But he was in pain, she said, and she now wonders whether it was his disease or because the medication he was getting contained little or no pain-killing drug.

Another said her mother never complained until she went to St Mary's of the Lake. There, "she said her

medications weren't working any more." Addressing Denouden directly, the woman told her: "I have to ask myself, were these the days you were stealing her medication?"

"She needed her medication to ease her pain," she told Denouden. "What did you need it for?"

Several said their faith in the health-care system and in St. Mary's of the Lake has been damaged. A couple observed that Denouden could have sought help for her addiction and didn't.

Combined, they spoke of grief, anger, feelings of betrayal, even guilt at not being able to protect a loved one in their final days and hours. One man told the judge that since he learned what Denouden did, he's relived the experience of watching his wife die "several times a day."

Another, who didn't read his statement aloud, wrote that he doesn't know if Denouden's actions directly impacted his wife. But he wonders — and he asks: "Could I have been more vigilant? Could I have done more to stop the hurt to my wife?"

Assistant Crown attorney Gerard Laarhuis told Justice O'Brien he's recommending a three-year penitentiary sentence for Denouden.

His submissions to the judge suggested that he anticipates her defence lawyer, however, will urge the imposition of no jail time or community sentencing that she can serve in her own home.

Laarhuis conceded that Denouden's pre-sentence report is positive and told Justice O'Brien he accepts that her remorse is genuine. She's also a person who had a career, has a family and no criminal record, and "the most difficult part," he said, is that she's a mother. He anticipates that Ertel will make the argument that she shouldn't be separated that long from her child.

But Laarhuis argued the court must judge the crime as well as the person and asked rhetorically where Denouden was when her newborn son was in intensive care in the neonatal unit overcoming the opiate addiction he acquired in the womb.

He then answered his own question, reminding the judge that she went to St. Mary's of the Lake to steal more hydromorphone.

When Denouden entered her pleas in April, Justice O'Brien was told she was finally caught and Kingston Police was called after an internal investigation discovered the access control card she'd been assigned had been used 17 times between Feb. 27 and June 9 — while she was on maternity leave — to enter the palliative care unit's locked medication room. Ward clerks had spotted her twice in that period exiting the medication room and leaving by the back stairs, and her swipe card was used 41 times to get into the hospital.

She later met with the hospital's program manager and employee relations consultant, with the president of her Ontario Nurses Association local and an ONA labour relations officer present, and admitted she'd been stealing and using hydromorphone daily since 2013.

Denouden told hospital administrators that she began by scavenging discarded but only partially emptied single-use vials from the "sharps container," and progressed to stealing the contents of sealed vials and cartridges, including cartridges hooked up to patients via intravenous drip.

She also took hydromorphone prepared for patients, injected it into herself and charted the dose as though the patient had received it. When she had the opportunity, she compromised the drug supply, using a syringe to withdraw hydromorphone from sealed vials, replacing it with saline.

St. Mary's of the Lake first found evidence of her tampering in September 2013 and again in February and May 2015. In June 2015, after she was identified as the culprit, the entire narcotics inventory was ordered removed and replaced.

Laarhuis said "this is a breach of trust on stilts." He argued that she could have just stolen drugs without affecting patient care.

"In my submission, your honour, her moral culpability is very high," he told Justice O'Brien. "She always chose herself over others," and "the harm she caused is indescribable."

Defence lawyer Mark Ertel has yet to make his submissions to the judge and initially requested that Justice O'Brien postpone his client's sentencing until after the College of Nurses receives its key report in about six weeks.

The judge, however, said he didn't believe an assessment of the extent of her efforts to change her life "should be a show-stopper." He told Ertel: "I'm just unclear that what we're waiting for is something that should stop the timing of this sentencing."

On the other hand, he wasn't prepared to push through on sentencing. "I'm mindful that there are people who are seeking closure in this matter," he said. "But we're here to get it right, not get it quick."

The lawyers will appear Friday to schedule a date for defence submissions on sentence.

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Italian man lay dead in flat for 5 years before anyone noticed

25/04

thelocal.it

*The Local*

The Local · 26 May 2016, 15:54

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The body of a man who died five years ago was found on Thursday in his home in Sardinia.

The body of Marcello Putzu, who would have been 59 this year, was found only because a neighbour in the San Gavino Monreale area of Cagliari reported a leak coming from the apartment.

Firefighters had to break down the door of the home, which neighbours believed had simply been vacated by the previous dwellers, before discovering the man's skeleton, Unione Sarda reported.

Nobody had questioned Putzo's disappearance, and nobody went looking for him, the newspaper said.

Some receipts and prescriptions, dating back to 2011, along with some food, were found in the apartment.

Putzo, a father of two, was made redundant from his role as a train technician, and never found a job again, the newspaper said. His wife left with their two young children in 2007.

He is believed to have died of natural causes.

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HUFFPOST RELIGION

Jesus: The First Transgender Man

05/18/2016 02:45 pm ET | Updated May 18, 2016

• Suzanne DeWitt Hall



2016-05-17-1463498281-215974-2353558319_38f0affb6e_b.jpg

The current flap in conservative Christian circles about bathroom access is a bit baffling. They shout about God not making mistakes, as if God only works in binaries and anything falling outside of black and white cannot be from him. But we don't have a black and white God; creation is so full of color and variation that it's incomprehensible how we Christians struggle to pare him down to the limited palette of our individual expectations.

The worst offenders are the Christian's who *claim* to take the Bible literally. Of course they don't actually do that; they impose their own filters on stories and phrases to fit their particular ideology. If they really did as they claim to do, they would quickly see that Jesus must be, by their own exegetical rules, the first transgender male.

Let's take a look at what the Bible and Christianity tell us.

The teaching of the church from ancient days through today is that Jesus received his fleshly self from Mary. The church also teaches that Jesus is the new Adam, born of the new Eve.

Now Eve is a fascinating creature for many reasons. The Bible tells us she is the first example of human cloning, which I touched on in this post. But the fun doesn't stop there. If we take the Genesis account in it's literal meaning, as conservative Christians demand that we do, she is also the first case of a transgender woman. God reached into Adam, pulled out a bit of rib bone, and grew Eve from that XY DNA into Adam's companion. She was created genetically male, and yet trans-formed into woman.

Then along comes Jesus and the whole pattern is both repeated and reversed. The first couple's refusal to cooperate is turned around by Mary's yes, and the second act of cloning occurs. The Holy Spirit comes upon the second Eve, and the child takes flesh from her and is born. Born of her flesh. Born with XX chromosome pairing. Born genetically female, and yet trans-formed into man.

States that do not support trans persons' right to choose the restroom that fits their identity demand that bathroom usage be based on a person's "biological sex." One can imagine a future in which state licences require not only a vision test, but also a genetic test so that bouncers proofing at bathroom doors have something tangible to review. And that means that if Jesus and Eve were walking around today, perhaps shopping at the mall for a Father's Day gift, they'd have to swap restrooms. Now Jesus could surely manage to finesse his way around a woman's room, but poor Eve...

A quick look at the dictionary for the prefix "trans" tells us that it means "across," "beyond," "through," and "changing thoroughly," all of which are great terms for the person of Christ. He cuts *across* all boundaries. He is *beyond* our understanding. He is *through* all and in all. He *changes us thoroughly* into new creations.

In his person, and in his salvific actions, Jesus is truly the first and forever trans man.

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Matthew de Grood told psychiatrist a voice said 'kill them before they get you'

By Nancy Hixt and Erika Tucker Global News



Two expert forensic psychiatrists testified Wednesday in the trial of Matthew de Grood. One said he was “clearly psychotic” when he stabbed and killed five people in Calgary’s worst mass murder; the second agreed and diagnosed him with schizophrenia.

Day 3 of the trial started with the Crown closing its case, and the defence calling Dr. Alberto Choy, an expert witness specializing in forensic psychiatry. Choy conducted a two-hour interview with de Grood in September 2014. In the trial, he was called to give his opinion on if de Grood should be found not criminally responsible (NCR).

NCR applies to those who are found to have committed an act that constitutes an offence, but cannot appreciate or understand what they did was wrong due to a mental disorder at the time.

Court heard de Grood was initially sent to the Southern Alberta Forensic Psychiatry Centre and put on anti-psychotic medication following his arrest. He was then sent to hospital in Edmonton for assessment.

Choy testified there was evidence de Grood was paranoid leading up to the attack, and was suffering from a psychosis when he stabbed and killed five people, adding he was “clearly psychotic at the time of the killings.”

“I wasn’t able to come up with a specific diagnosis for Mr. de Grood,” Choy said, except that he suffered from a mental disorder.

Dr. Lenka Zedkova, the second forensic psychiatrist to testify Wednesday, spent about 14 hours with de Grood, interviewed his parents and reviewed his medical records and history. She concluded he suffered from schizophrenia.

“De Grood said the voice of the sun god told him, ‘kill them all before they kill you’ and to him it marked the beginning of the war,” she said. “My opinion is that he did not know what he was

doing was morally wrong.”

“He intended to kill these individuals...because he believed his life was in danger and they were about to kill him.”

In his testimony, Choy also suggested de Grood understood he was stabbing and killing the victims, but not that it was morally wrong.

“He felt he was in imminent danger,” Choy said.

Zackariah Rathwell, 21, Jordan Segura, 22, Josh Hunter, 23, Kaitlin Perras, 23, and Lawrence Hong, 27, were stabbed to death at a house party in Brentwood on April 15, 2014.



Choy said de Grood told him he felt threatened by conversations with Rathwell, and that he believed all of the victims were part of the “other side” against him.

“Mr. de Grood recounted that on 14 April 2014 he went to work as usual but had known that the world was going to end that day,” reads a document submitted by Choy.

“He purchased garlic to protect himself because the vampires and werewolves were on the side of evil...”

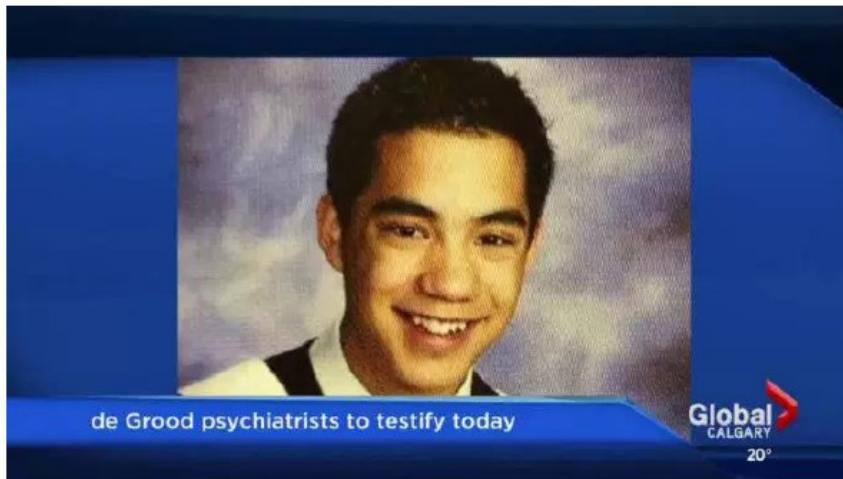
“As he spoke to Zackariah he began to believe that Zackariah was a werewolf as they discussed the end of the world. He indicated that he felt Zackariah was arguing with him but he felt immediately threatened when he said ‘maybe you’ll die before me’ to Mr. de Grood. It was at this point that Mr. de Grood decided to go to the kitchen to grab the knife to arm himself before Zackariah could attack him.”

Choy’s report said de Grood told him his beliefs about werewolves came from the movie, *Twilight*, and his beliefs about vampires came from the graphic novel, *Cirque du Freak*.

De Grood told Choy he’d heard a male voice, “who he thought was the devil, telling him to ‘kill them before they get you.’”

On the stand, the defence asked Choy and Zedkova about the possibility de Grood was “faking” a mental illness. Choy said it’s not uncommon for people to exaggerate in such cases, but said steps were taken to check if de Grood had been faking.

“I was aware he was well-educated,” Choy said. “He seemed quite eager to tell me about voices.”



Zedkova said she found it "highly unlikely" he was faking symptoms, adding it would have been hard to fake them so consistently and convincingly for so long.

Choy's investigation concluded de Grood legitimately suffered from a mental disorder. The defence asked if someone should have seen or done something

leading up to the killings.

"People don't always recognize symptoms," Choy said.

When the Crown cross-examined Choy, he said he formed an independent opinion on de Grood's mental state and that he was not retained by the defence or the Crown.



Judge allows families to read tributes during Matthew de Grood murder trial

When asked if fleeing from police and resisting arrest is consistent with an NCR case, Choy said the accused felt police were part of the conspiracy. Choy admitted there were some inconsistencies in de Grood's stories that he couldn't account for, but reiterated he didn't believe he was faking.

"He was very severely ill," Choy said, referring to when de Grood was isolated in hospital after the killings.

Outside court, defence lawyer Allan Fay said Choy was hired by the province to give an unbiased opinion.

"This isn't some story we've made up," Fay said. "This isn't some hired gun that I've paid a lot of money to come in to give this kind of testimony to give my client an easy out."

"No matter what we do, there's going to be certain members of the public who aren't satisfied, but it's important to know my client isn't getting any special breaks because his father is a police officer. My client isn't trying to avail himself of some trumped-up defence. My client was mentally ill when this occurred to the point that he was incapable of appreciating the moral wrongness of what he was doing."

Fay said he was sent to hospital in Edmonton to avoid any perception he was getting special treatment in Calgary because his father is a police officer in the city. He said de Grood has been medicated to the point he's no longer delusional.

"That's the difference. At the time this happened, he was delusional."

De Grood pleaded not guilty to five counts of first-degree murder Monday. An agreed statement of facts was entered Monday, in which 24-year-old de Grood admitted to stabbing each of the five victims with a kitchen knife. A publication ban was also lifted on a police document containing a detailed account of the time before, during, and after the killings.

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Canadian court weighs fate of man who claims he killed 5 he thought were werewolves

2016-05-23

chicagotribune.com

Fred Barbash

It was the last day of classes at the University of Calgary, celebrated for half a century as "Bermuda Shorts Day" and the beginning of new lives for graduates. There would be not merely a blood moon but a total eclipse of the moon that night. For some 20 young people in Canada on April 14, 2014, it was reason to party. But for Matthew de Groot, it was reason to kill. And kill he did early on the morning of April 15, when he brutally stabbed to death five unsuspecting students in the leafy neighborhood of Brentwood.

Now Canada is riveted by his trial and the details that are emerging about his detachment from reality. In his mind, the full moon meant the end of days and was a call for a hero to slay the werewolves and vampires at the party - a call he answered. He admits he did it. He killed five people who had no reason to believe he was anything other than normal.

But he says he was not criminally responsible and thus not guilty. The legal question is whether he was suffering from a mental disorder at the time of the five slayings that rendered him incapable of appreciating the nature of what he did, or that what he did was wrong. If the court finds he wasn't criminally responsible, he'll be sent to a psychiatric facility for treatment rather than a prison for potentially five life sentences.

The trial, which began May 16, is also a study in psychosis, a detachment from reality that can manifest itself without warning especially in young people. The psychiatrists who examined him portray a rather abrupt divorce between de Groot and the real world which transformed him from the respectable son of a high-ranking police officer and a promising college grad bound for law school and a career as a prosecutor to, in his mind, a character in his own fantasy of conspiracies - conspiracies involving werewolves, vampires, an ancient Masonic cult called "Illuminati," and for good measure, U.S. President Barack Obama, among others.

"He began to believe that he was the son of God and also the god Anubis," reported court appointed forensic psychiatrist, Lenka Zedkova, of Alberta Edmonton Hospital. "He told his examiners that he had been reading about and believed that that there had been a conspiracy involving the Illuminati, werewolves and vampires, and that there was to be a war. He indicated to us that the music he was listening to also referred to him as a 'hero' citing the lyrics from one of the musical bands that he had posted on his Facebook account. He reported that he had believed he was Darth Vader and that his father was on the side of evil.. . .He admitted that he began to believe that the evil side included Barack Obama and the Nazis. He believed that the world was to end April 14 because there was a full moon that night."

Then there's the human question, for the families of those slain and those following the trial - a dread that sends shivers up the spine: You go to a party, or your son or daughter goes to a

party with people they think they know. Nice kids. College kids. And some of them don't come back alive for inexplicable reasons. Had there been more people to kill, de Grood told psychiatrists, he would have killed them too.

Zachariah Rothwell, 21; Jordan Segura, 22; Josh Hunter, 23; Kaitlin Perras, 23 and Lawrence Hong, 27 - they're all dead, at the bloody hands of de Grood, who stabbed each and every one of them without provocation, without warning, with an 8-inch kitchen knife he calmly removed from its wooden block. They had dreams too, as the court heard when it, unusually, allowed family members to stand and pay tribute to their lost loved ones. "He was passionate, and driven and he was building up to something," said Miles Hong, the brother of Lawrence. "I never thought that there would be a tomorrow without my brother," he said, according to the CBC.

"The word psychosis," says the National Institute of Mental Health, "is used to describe conditions that affect the mind, where there has been some loss of contact with reality. When someone becomes ill in this way it is called a psychotic episode. During a period of psychosis, a person's thoughts and perceptions are disturbed and the individual may have difficulty understanding what is real and what is not. Symptoms of psychosis include delusions (false beliefs) and hallucinations (seeing or hearing things that others do not see or hear). Other symptoms include incoherent or nonsense speech, and behavior that is inappropriate for the situation."

It may or may not be a symptom of mental illness, such as schizophrenia or bipolar disorder. And it can be hard to spot, with many people who experience a first episode having symptoms for more than a year before anyone figures it out and they get treatment, according to the NIMH. And "the bad news," wrote NIMH director Thomas Insel in a 2014 blog post, "is that we don't yet have an intervention proven to prevent psychosis in those at risk."

De Grood was one of those who went unspotted until it was too late. Sure, there was a strange Facebook post, a reference to a rock band and a song, but it was like a million other posts about rock bands, with nothing obviously threatening, except in hindsight. Indeed, he seemed to have everything to look forward to, and little to regret.

He held a job at the local Safeway and had given his employers no reason to suspect there was anything dreadfully wrong when he headed over to Segura's rented house for the party, though witnesses at Safeway said he was "not looking well," according to Zedkova's psychiatric report. Before leaving, according to the statement of facts, he bought a box cutter to take with him.

It later was revealed that he had "purchased garlic to protect himself because the vampires and werewolves were on the side of evil," Zedkova wrote in her report to the court.

The sequence of events after he left the Safeway is drawn from the court statements of two psychiatrists, including Zedkova, and a statement of facts that was read aloud in court by the prosecutor and agreed to by the defense attorney, as described in the Canadian press, including CTV news, the Toronto Star, the CBC and Global News.

Once at the party, witnesses would later tell police, de Grood did indeed turn "weird." He spoke of "vampires" and of "getting ready for the big apocalypse."

And he texted odd, frightening, messages that made little sense.

To his parents: "I'm OK, mom. I promise." "You can't come here or you will die." "I promise I'm coming home ASAP."

To the Safeway manager: "Trust that I never hurt anyone." "All will be known" and the number "5," with no further explanation.

"Are you OK?" his father responded. "I am very concerned about your incoherent ramblings."

"Illuminati," his son responded. "Mary doesn't have to die this time operation mind crime to American soldier."

Illuminati? Why the reference to the "Ancient and Illuminated Seers of Bavaria," a Masonic offshoot, which, like the Masons, have a cherished place in the sometimes deranged literature of conspiracy and paranoia.

"You're sounding like you are losing your mental faculties," his father replied.

"Hey," his father texted, "where are you. . .[don't] do anything rash. We love you."

To that, there was no reply. By that time, according to testimony and evidence at his trial over the past week, he had begun to do something so rash there was nothing left to say, nothing that could be said.

"Around 12:30 a.m." on April 15, as the CBC reported, "some of the party guests were gathered around a fire outside when Riley Lindenaar saw de Grood place his cellphone on an axe blade and drop it in the fire. Lindenaar got the phone out of fire but de Grood grabbed it, smashed it with the axe and threw it away with no explanation. Brendan McCabe said de Grood complained that his parents thought he was going insane and wanted him to get help and go on medication. He also said the end of the world was coming at midnight and spoke of 'purification' and 'jihad.'"

Around 1 a.m. McCabe left the house with three others to get food at McDonald's.

De Grood engaged in a conversation with Zachariah Rothwell and "began to believe" he was a "werewolf as they discussed the end of the world. He indicated that he felt Zachariah was arguing with him but he felt immediately threatened when he said 'maybe you'll die before me' to Mr. De Grood," Zedkova stated. "It was at this point" that he went to the kitchen "to grab the knife before Zachariah could attack him. . . .He believed that this was the only way to kill a werewolf."

He then went after the others, telling Zedkova that "the four other victims were attacked because he felt that they were part of the conspiracy," the report said, because "earlier in the evening they had snubbed him." And besides, "he had heard a male voice, who he thought

was the devil, telling him to 'kill them before they get you.'"

Which he did.

That crowd at the party had dwindled from 20 or 15 to a handful. In all, de Grood stabbed and killed five party-goers, including Segura, a total of 22 times. It was the worst mass killing in Calgary's history, drawing worldwide attention in part because these things don't happen there.

The examinations psychiatrists presented at the trial have offered a rare window into the mind of a mass killer. What the young people at the party didn't know, couldn't have known, was that a monster had materialized in their midst.

The statement, read by Crown prosecutor Neil Wiberg, said de Grood stabbed the victims quickly, according to CTV news, the Toronto Star and the CBC.

"I just want to say that when I stabbed them, I tried to do it mercifully," de Grood was quoted as saying in the statement. "I aimed for their heart. They put up a struggle, which made it hard but, so you know, it wasn't sadistic or anything," de Grood is quoted telling police officers.

"What I did may seem atrocious but I was killing Medusas, werewolves."

When the others returned to the house from McDonald's about 20 minutes later, they heard screaming, according to the statement as reported by the CBC. "Hunter came running out of the house with de Grood chasing after him. Hunter told them de Grood had a knife, before collapsing on the front lawn, where friends began trying to save his life.

"De Grood's hands and his knife were covered in blood. 'It's the night of the long knives,' de Grood said, before taking off on foot, running."

Brendan McCabe, a boyhood friend who had brought de Grood to the party, chased him and caught up with him, shoving him against a parked truck. De Grood wiped his bloody hands on McCabe and said they were "blood brothers."

Then de Grood reached into his pocket for a box cutter he'd brought from work and told McCabe to back off or he'd be next.

"McCabe complied," as the CBC reported, "and returned to the house where Hunter was clinging to life on the front lawn. Inside, Segura, Rathwell and Hong were already dead. Perras was also critically wounded, and friends were trying frantically to save her and Hunter."

De Grood ran again. Police tracked him with a police dog, which brought him to the ground. In the ambulance, he reportedly declared himself "the son of God," "born in an incubator" and an "alien."

He wasn't just "losing his mental faculties," as his father suspected, the psychiatrists testified

last week. He had already lost them. De Grood, had suffered a psychotic episode - his first, as far as they knew, as he had no prior history and no diagnosed mental illness.

His delusional state was deep and deeply dangerous. That full moon, so dazzling to the Northern Hemisphere, was to him a sign that the world was coming to an end, psychiatrists said in their reports.

Others at the party, in his mind, were werewolves who he felt compelled to destroy. His twisted brain harbored illusions of a sinister albeit incoherent conspiracy. Neither de Grood nor the doctors were sure when it all started, when his "thinking changed," as Zedkova reported. It may have been at least two weeks prior to the crimes, but he kept it well hidden.

It was an odd assortment of conspirators to be sure, but not so odd that you can't find similar linkages described on the internet as Robert Todd Carroll writes in the Skeptics Dictionary:

The Illuminati "were members of a secret society in Bavaria in the late 18th century. They had a political agenda that included republicanism and abolition of monarchies, which they tried to institute by means of subterfuge, secrecy, and conspiracy, including the infiltration of other organizations. They fancied themselves to be 'enlightened' but they had little success and were destroyed within fifteen years of their origin. . . .Paranoid conspiracy theorists (PCTs) believe the Illuminati cabal still exists, either in its original form or as a paradigm for later cabals." Many PCTs believe "that large Jewish banking families have been orchestrating various political revolutions and machinations throughout Europe and America since the late eighteenth century, with the ultimate aim of bringing about a satanic New World Order. What George Bush was talking about in his state of the union address in 1991 was no less than the establishment of a single world government with the anti-Christ (who some say is Bill Clinton (or is he a decoy?), but could be Pat Robertson or George W. Bush or Barack Obama) at its head. . . . There are several 'sects' of PCTs. . . .They each think the others are evil or nuts but their paranoia has the same focus: the end is near."

But de Grood was no mere conspiracy theorist, as both psychiatrists agreed. Based on their examinations of him, he was at that moment psychotic.

"Mr. De Grood," the Zedkova report continued, "recounted that on 14 April he went to work as usual but had known the world was going to end that day. He purchased garlic to protect himself because the vampires and werewolves were on the side of the evil. He admitted in our interview that his beliefs about werewolves came from the movie series, Twilight, and his beliefs about vampires came from his reading the graphic novel Cirque du Freak. . . .He believed he need to wear gloves and a box cutter that night because it was his job to dismember the bodies from the war that was at hand and to dispose the bodies before the police arrived because the police were part of the conspiracy." De Grood told psychiatrists he wasn't sure when the war would begin.

But the exchange, an argument with another party-goer, Zacharia, convinced him that it had.

His future will soon be in the hands of a judge. "What they will have to show is the accused didn't appreciate . . . or didn't know what he was doing was morally wrong," Michael Nesbitt,

of the University of Calgary Law School, told the CBC. "So really, what it's going to be about is his capacity to understand either what he was doing would result in death or to understand that what he was doing was wrong." If the court finds de Grood not criminally responsible, it would likely order him hospitalized, though it could send him home under restrictions.

Zedhkova and a second psychiatrist, Alberto Choy, both said that they believed de Grood should be found not criminally responsible. "In my opinion," wrote Choy, "it is more likely than not that Mr. De Grood appreciated the nature and quality of his acts in stabbing his victims. . . . However, it is my opinion that, more likely than not, Mr. De Grood did not know, or even appreciate, that his behavior was morally wrong because he was operating under a delusion that he was being threatened at the time."

The trial resumes with closing argument on Tuesday.

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Is King Arthur buried in a field in Shropshire?

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Is King Arthur buried in a field in Shropshire? Historian claims tomb of legendary ruler lies near medieval village

fort is the best candidate

- **But he believes the site of a former chapel in the village may also be likely**
- **He claims poem from the Dark Ages points to churches of 'Bassa'**

- **Historian says King Arthur was buried outside the village of Baschurch**
- **He says an earthworks thought to be an old**

By Richard Gray for MailOnline

Legend says King Arthur was taken to the Isle of Avalon after he was injured in a battle with his enemy Mordred before disappearing.

But now a historian claims to have found where the great British ruler is buried - in a field in Shropshire.

Graham Phillips, who has been researching the life of King Arthur for years, says he has found evidence that suggests the medieval leader was buried outside the village of Baschurch.



Forget Avalon! A historian claims to have found where King Arthur is buried - in a field in Shropshire. An aerial photograph of the site, known as The Berth, is shown above

He claims to have narrowed down the king's tomb to one of two locations - an earthworks just outside the village thought to be an old fort, dubbed 'The Berth' and the site of a former chapel.

He is now calling on English Heritage to allow an investigation The Berth, while he is also interested in looking at the site of a former chapel.



Mr Phillips claims to have narrowed down the king's tomb to one of two locations. An illustration of King Arthur is pictured above

Mr Phillips, from Stafford, who explains his theory in his latest book *The Lost Tomb of King Arthur*, says his investigations follow on from his previous works which say King Arthur lived at the Roman fortress at Wroxeter.

It's traditionally thought the king led the defence of Britain against Saxon invaders wielding his sword, Excalibur and was born at Tintagel Castle in Cornwall.

Mr Phillips said: 'From my research he came from Shropshire, not the south-west of England as everybody else says.

'In the Oxford University Library there is a poem from the Dark Ages which refers to the kings from Wroxeter who were buried at the Churches of Bassa - and

when you think about anywhere in Shropshire that sounds similar, you think of Baschurch.

'There is a place that matches the description just outside the village, an earthworks known as The Berth, which were two islands in a lake, though obviously the lake has now gone.'

Mr Phillips, who describes himself as a historical detective, says although no excavations have taken place, some outline work has found a pit containing a large piece of metal.

He believes this may be King Arthur, buried with his shield, just as monarchs were laid to rest at that time.

He said: 'At the moment I'm trying to get permission from English Heritage for an archaeological dig, but they don't often give that because they want to protect the site.'

'With technology moving forward, in the not-so-distant future we may be able to see what is in there without digging.'

'But I believe it is absolutely necessary because otherwise other people might go there and destroy the site.'



Mr Phillips is calling on English Heritage to allow an investigation The Berth (pictured from above), while he is also interested in looking at the site of a former chapel

Mr Phillips is also keen on another site, a country lane in the village called Birch Grove where evidence of an old chapel was found back in the 1930s.

He added: 'In some versions of the tale of King Arthur he died on an island, but was brought back

to shore for burial.

'So it is possible and when they found the remains, they found part of a gravestone with Latin writing that appears to translate to 'Here Lies'.

'It would be easier to get permission to dig there because it is not protected, so that could take place very soon.'

FACT OR FICTION: DID THE LEGENDARY KING ARTHUR REALLY EXIST?

Both the *Historia Brittonum* (History of the Britons) and *Annales Cambriae* (Welsh Annals), state that Arthur was a genuine historical figure, a Romano-British leader who fought against the invading Anglo-Saxons in the late 5th to early 6th century.

The 9th Century *Historia Brittonum* lists 12 battles that King Arthur fought, including the Battle of Mons Badonicus, where he is said to have killed 960 men - but some scholars have dismissed the reliability of this text.

Tintangel Castle is popularly thought to be the legendary birthplace of King Arthur based on the

discovery of a slate engraved with 'Artognou' which was found at the site in 1998.

Silchester was the site of King Arthur's coronation and was able to continuously defend itself against the Saxons.

The Roman name for Silchester was Calleva – similar to the name given to Arthur's sword, Excalibur.

One of Arthur's celebrated battles against the Saxons was fought at Chester or the City of the Legion, as it was known in the Dark Ages.

Archaeologists have discovered evidence of battle at nearby Heronbridge, and recent excavations show the amphitheatre was fortified during this period, with a shrine to a Christian martyr at its centre.

This fits a description of Arthur's Round Table, which was said to be a very large structure, seating 1,600 of his warriors.

During the 1960s, excavations by Philip Rahtz showed someone had inhabited the top of Glastonbury Tor during the so-called Arthurian period.

According to the legends, this could have been King Meluas, who abducted Queen Guinevere to his castle at Glastonbury, or Arthur's warrior Gwynn ap Nudd, who was banished from his Palace on the Tor.

In 1191, monks at Glastonbury Abbey found the body of a gigantic man, wounded several times in the head. The bones of his wife and a tress of her golden hair were also in the oak coffin.

Found with the burial was an ancient lead cross, inscribed with 'Here lies buried the famous king Arthur with Guinevere his second wife, in the Isle of Avalon'.

In 1962, archaeological evidence was found supporting the story that a tomb within the ancient church had been disturbed centuries previously.

The whereabouts of the cross and bones are no longer known.

However, Arthur is not mentioned in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle or any documents written between 400 and 820 - including Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People.



Comments (

Nutty Norman, Catalhoy uk, United Kingdom, 1 week ago

In a word. No.

Zoe Porphyrogenita, Melbourne, Australia, 2 weeks ago

daveyh is right: in the earliest tales referring to Arthur, he was "dux bellorum", war leader, not a king, though in the "Historia Brittonum" he commanded the armies of several kings. Arthur occurs in the late medieval manuscript of "Culhwch and Olwen", the style of which is dated to 1060-1100, significantly as Geoffrey of Monmouth based his "King Arthur" primarily on the 11th century knight commander, Count Alan Rufus (1040-1093), whose epitaph at Bury St Edmunds identified him with the star Arcturus and called him "the flower of the Kings of Britain". Alan's family came from the Welsh-speaking county of Gwened (Vannes) in Brittany but by a series of dynastic intermarriages were closely related to the kings he served - Edward the Confessor, William I and William II - and to the Welf dynasty of Saxony. Alan was popular with the ladies: for example, Archbishop Anselm reprimanded Gunhild, King Harold's daughter, for her romance with him - astonishing given his role at Hastings.

CrystalDawn0603, Keysville, United States, 2 weeks ago

In a thousand years, I wonder if people will read bits and pieces of Harry Potter and think it's based on a real person and the 'unknown' author simply exaggerated his exploits.

GlynB, Newcastle upon Tyne, United Kingdom, 2 weeks ago

That's a DAMN LIE! King Arthur was a Geordie, and the Round Table was just the table he sat at when he was buying a round. Bless him!

daveyh, Norwich UK, United Kingdom, 2 weeks ago

Arthur was a warrior that drew all tribes together and he was their leader at that time, not a King, that title is for Hollywood and ancient French poets, who probably invented Lancelot and Guinevere with the Holy Grail thrown in as an added interest.

Concerned Patriot, Chichester, United Kingdom, 2 weeks ago

How about some grammar? How about some punctuation? Arthur was a warrior WHO drew.

daveyh, Norwich UK, United Kingdom, 2 weeks ago

I didn't know that Arthur was a World Health Organisation member, Conce.

mikef, Coventry, United Kingdom, 2 weeks ago

No because it is a myth

The Truth, World, United Kingdom, 2 weeks ago

There was also a book that came out years ago saying his name was not Arthur but that he brought together the Britons and Romano-Britons into a force and used the name 'Bear' as a battle name. Arth in Briton and Ursus in Latin so was Arthursus 'Arthur' and they said they had historical proof he was a Welsh prince and said they found where he was buried, but then again there was the book saying everything in his life was based around the English/Scottish border and had nothing to do with the south coast.

Zoe Porphyrogenita, Melbourne, Australia, 2 weeks ago

Both "Arthur" and "Uther" occur as names of real persons in documents from the 800s in Brittany, and yes "Arthur" derives from the word for "bear". After 1066 the Bretons were active all over Britain, from Cornwall to Kent, London to the East and West Midlands, Yorkshire, Cumbria, and across the Scottish borders. Not at Chester though: they refused point blank to join the attack on the innocent people of Cheshire who were verbally expressing their right not to acknowledge William the Conqueror as their king.

Ray in L.A., Hollywood, United States, 2 weeks ago

Be careful to not dig up Graham Chapman by mistake...

WineMaker, NYC, United States, 2 weeks ago

My favorite movie about King Arthur is called Excalibur (1981).

Zoe Porphyrogenita, Melbourne, Australia, 2 weeks ago

"Excalibur" was unforgettable.

Zoe Porphyrogenita, Melbourne, Australia, 2 weeks ago

"Excalibur" was unforgettable. People who didn't enjoy the Clive Owen movie were perhaps expecting it to be more like that.

Johnny Euphoric, Crawley UK and Sydney, Australia, 2 weeks ago

Some say King Arthur was just a myth, a legend... but there is often a lot of truth in myths and legends... Whole religions have been built on less!

Zoe Porphyrogenita, Melbourne, Australia, 2 weeks ago

Whole sciences, too! :)

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The Last Flight of Cecil Grace | Historic Mysteries

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HISTORIC MYSTERIES

Historic Mysteries

Doug MacGowan May 21, 2016 Unexplained

Most people know of the disappearance of the plane (and the two people on said plane) of Amelia Earhart in 1937. Many also know of the missing plane carrying musician Glenn Miller in 1944. But earlier planes that vanished into thin air may not be as well-remembered.

Arguably the earliest instance of a plane whose pilot (and the plane itself) went missing is the 1910 disappearance of an aviator named Cecil Grace

. He was an adventurous man who came from a well-to-do family—his uncle having been the mayor of New York from 1881 to 1882 and 1885 to 1886.



Cecil Grace. Image: From the collection of Jean-Pierre Lauwers

It should be noted that 1910 was only seven years since the Wright Brothers landmark flight at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina. In those few short years, air flight had grown by leaps and bounds and resulted in motor-driven planes and fame for early aviators. Soon there was money to be made from flying, and an early prize was Maurice de Forest's Baron de Forest Prize of £2,000 to the first Englishman who could fly across the English Channel in an English-built airplane and land as far into Europe as possible. The amount was later doubled

by a French airman.

That amount of money was nearly a fortune in the first decade of the 20th century, and Grace probably didn't need the money, but so much fame was riding on the prize that many amateur English pilots attempted to win the prize.

On December 22, 1910, Grace managed to fly from Swingate Downs near Dover to Calais in France. He wanted to go further into Europe to claim the prize, so he decided to fly back to England and try again. He left France early in the afternoon and headed west in a journey that should take about 30-40 minutes (a passenger plane today can cross the 21-mile Channel in almost a matter of seconds).

He did make headway. A coastguard ship, the North Goodwin Lightship, spotted an airplane approximately six miles out at sea near the coast of Kent, England, and it most likely was

Grace's.

But when Grace did not land back in England by 3:30, fellow pilots at the destination airfield began to worry. The natural conclusions were that he had either crashed into the Channel or, due to bad weather, turned around and headed back to France.

The full mystery continued until January 6, 1911, when a pair of aviator goggles and a man's cap washed ashore on a beach in Belgium. Many weeks later, in mid-March, a body was found near the same beach that might have been Grace's corpse but it could not be positively identified as Grace due to advanced decomposition. Later that same month Grace was officially declared dead, but doubts lingered.

He was later heralded in both England and France. A stained glass window in Eastchurch's All Saints's Church and a monument at Calais contain mentions of Grace in their memorials. And he was awarded the British Royal Aero Club's Gold Medal after his death.

Did he crash somewhere into the cold waters of the Channel? The body found in March of 1911 was far from Grace's last sighting near Kent and could have been that of an earlier man who went overboard in a boat or a tragic suicide. In court, it is doubtful that the body washed ashore in Belgium would be officially and definitively identified as Grace. Grace and his plane may still be undiscovered.

SOURCES:

"Cecil Grace," Wikipedia, pulled 5/20/16

"A Century of Missing Planes," Wilkinson Publishing Pty Ltd, 2016

Doug MacGowan lives on the San Francisco peninsula with his wife, a dog, and far too many cats. He has published three books on the topic of historic true crime. In his free time he enjoys reading.

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The last woman in Britain jailed for witchcraft could soon be granted a posthumous pardon



Helen Duncan was the last person to be tried for witchcraft

Helen Duncan was the last person to be tried for witchcraft

A witch who was jailed to keep her quiet during WW2 could soon receive a posthumous pardon.

Helen Duncan was the last woman in Britain convicted under the Witchcraft Act on what many believe was trumped-up charges.

Her family maintain that she was imprisoned by paranoid authorities who

feared she would reveal secrets about plans for the invasion of Europe in the run up to D Day.

The British Government were alarmed by reports that she had disclosed - allegedly from contacts in the spirit world - the sinking of two British warships long before they became public.

What particularly shocked them was the disclosure that she informed the parents of a missing sailor that his ship, HMS Barham, had sunk with a huge loss of life.

This was correct but news of the disaster had been suppressed to keep up morale as it came at a time when it appeared Britain was losing the war.

Those at the seance were shocked and distressed by her revelation as the long-serving battleship sank in the Mediterranean on November 25, 1941 but the loss was not officially confirmed until January 1942.

HMS Barham sunk by German U-Boat U 331 in November 1941

Barham's magazine, which stored hundreds of shells, exploded around four minutes after she was hit by three torpedoes sending the stricken ship to the bottom along with more than 800 of its 1,100-man crew.

The authorities panicked and the Scottish mum of six under surveillance as at first they believed she might be a spy who was getting confidential information from the War Office.

When she was arrested she was first charged under the Vagrancy Act but this was just a misdemeanor rather than a crime which was usually only attracted a fine rather than a jail



Rex

term.

What followed caused a sensation at the time as Duncan was then charged under an obscure 200-year-old law known as the Witchcraft Act, the first such charge in over a century.

She made history as she became the last “witch” in Britain to be tried and convicted under the 1735 law.

While many consider Duncan as nothing but a fraudster she was still convicted of using “black magic” and jailed for nine months at Holloway women’s prison.



Getty

Winston Churchill

Although some of her practices were open to question she was still a much sought-after clairvoyant and along

with her husband Henry she travelled the country holding seances and is believed to have given spiritual advice to Winston Churchill and George VI.

Churchill, then prime minister, is believed to have visited Duncan in prison and denounced her conviction as “tomfoolery”.

Britain’s war-time prime minister had an interest in the occult and in 1951, he repealed Witchcraft Act but Mrs Duncan’s stood and she is still officially Britain’s last witch and her family are now demanding a posthumous pardon.

Mrs Duncan died on December 6, 1956 aged 59.

Mrs Duncan’s family have a website dedicated to the medium and are urging the public to sign a petition calling for her to be granted a posthumous pardon at www.helenduncan.org.

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Chronic tardiness 'is a sign of insanity', scientists claim

02:37 EST, 4 June 2016 |

dailymail.co.uk



MailOnline US - news, sport, celebrity, science and health stories

Do your late friends drive you mad? They could be insane: Chronic tardiness 'is a sign of insanity', scientists claim

- **Research shows that some may actually self-sabotage plans to be on time**
- **Science writer says that this 'bizarre compulsion' could be sign of insanity**
- **He describes such tardy people as 'Clips' or 'chronically late insane people'**
- **But some psychologists and scientists say that it's not a medical disorder**

By Victoria Finan For Mailonline

People who are constantly late may be suffering from a form of insanity, a science writer has claimed.

Those who are chronically tardy to engagements struggle with how they view time and may have a 'bizarre compulsion to defeat themselves' by making plans that they know they cannot keep, according Tim Urban.

And he has even created an acronym to describe those people he believes are suffering from the lateness compulsion: Clips, or chronically late insane people.

Being annoyed by a chronically late friend is a common grumble, but one scientist has claimed that those who are never on times for engagements could actually be suffering from a form of insanity

The science writer claims there are three reasons why Clips are late so often: some are in denial about how time works, some 'have an aversion to changing circumstances' and some individuals are 'mad' at themselves, reported The Times.

While most psychologists agree there is no cure for lateness, it is possible to change.

Richard E Nisbett, a professor of psychology at the University of Michigan said: 'If chronic lateness is an illness then so is chronic tendency to interrupt, chronic tendency to run red lights and chronic failure to shine your shoes.

'As a recovering latecomer, I insist that for many if not most of my kind, being late is a manifestation of disorganisation or hostility that is fully within one's ability to control.'

It is thought that mental pathways that create chronic lateness originates in the same part of the brain that is affected by those who suffer with Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). In fact, many ADHD sufferers complain they struggle to keep time.

Some psychologists believe that chronic lateness could be a symptom of an underlying mood disorder such as depression. A recent study of more than 200 people at San Francisco State University showed that 17 per cent were chronically late.

Some psychologists believe that chronic lateness could be a symptom of an underlying mood disorder such as depression

Those unable to be punctual displayed similar patterns in behaviour including anxiety issues, and trouble with self-control. Researchers said the problem -- whether it affects a person personally or professionally -- is not irreversible, however.

Psychologists recommend those affected to work to make deadlines non-negotiable, monitor how long it takes to perform certain tasks and always plan to be early.

But some psychologists are sceptical about the claims that chronic lateness is a medical condition.

'The condition isn't in the DSM5 (the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders) so I'm not sure you can really call it a condition,' said Dr Sheri Jacobson, psychotherapist and director of Harley Therapy Clinic in London in 2013. 'Repeated lateness is usually a symptom of an underlying condition such as ADHD or depression but it can also just be habit.

'I think making everyday human behaviour into a medical condition is unwise.'

It's 'Time for Change' when speaking about mental health

Comments (467)

The comments below have not been moderated.

Roger Edward Harris, Nashville, United States, about a minute ago

I am a chronically early person, I am usually 10 to 15 minutes early, drives my wife mad, she is a chronically late person so much so am sure she will find a way to be late for her own funeral. It has taken more than 20 years before we except each other habits. But then again, I think only she and I are the only sane people and I am not too sure about her.

red47, Colorado, 15 minutes ago

Let me get this straight. If a person is chronically late, they are starkers. If a person can't figure out what gender they are, they are just fine. Is it just me, or has common sense gone the way of the buggy whip?

Ted Brown, NY, United States, 19 minutes ago

Chronic tardiness is arrogance. The problem with this story is that they don't tell you the mental disposition of people who are chronically, too early!

Ted Brown, NY, United States, 23 minutes ago

So let me get this right... A "science" writer makes a claim and the Dailymail, runs with it.... Gotcha.

Ted Brown, NY, United States, 22 minutes ago

And we wonder how Global warming nonsense gets promoted..

John Carpenter, New York, United States, about an hour ago

"As a recovering latecomer, I insist that for many if not most of my kind, being late is a manifestation of disorganisation or hostility that is fully within one's ability to control.' "I insist!" What pretentiousness. What are his credentials? He is suggesting that being habitually late is passive aggressiveness based on his own idiosyncratic behavior. He does not site any research to support this conclusion. A prediction: this is a blatantly transparent attempt to generate buzz about a book he is probably writing on the subject that will promise if you become punctual you'll transform your life. Follow us: @MailOnline on Twitter | DailyMail on Facebook

Darwik, Madrid, about an hour ago

I wanted to comment on yesterday's story... Is it too late?

John Carpenter, New York, United States, about an hour ago

"As a recovering latecomer, I insist that for many if not most of my kind, being late is a manifestation of disorganisation or hostility that is fully within one's ability to control.' "I insist!" What a pretentious ass. He is suggesting that being habitually late is passive aggressiveness based on his own idiosyncratic behavior. He does not site any research to support this conclusion. A prediction: this is a blatantly transparent attempt to generate buzz about a book he is probably writing on the subject that will promise if you become punctual you'll transform your life. Follow us: @MailOnline on Twitter | DailyMail on Facebook

Jennifer Bowhey, seattle, United States, about 2 hours ago

Maybe people should just relax and get over others being a few minutes late. Read the news or your email on your smartphone phone instead of taking offense over something as petty as this. Talk to others while your waiting and make joy spreading human connections. Half of those who take offense are chronically early, which is the same thing - not being on time- although they can't perceive it. I hate it when people show up early to my home but I don't take grand offense or assume they are being rude or let it ruin my day.

Ted Brown, NY, United States, 21 minutes ago

maybe you should just get over the fact that If I ever see you, I will break your frickin nose.

Peter Eric Clausen, Merritt Island, United States, about 3 hours ago

Your late lawyers, accountants etc aren't just rude, they are insane as the bogus article asserts. 8-O

MelissaLouis, New York, Barbados, about 3 hours ago

I get paid 90 dollar every hour for work at home on my PC. I never thought I'd be able to do it but my lovely girl friend is earning 15k/ monthly by FDx doing this job and she show me what hee do. See here what i do.....Careers-Report.COMtex.....please remove (tex) from web address...

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A Single Lightning Bolt Killed 21 Cows in South Dakota

msn.com

<http://www.msn.com/en-us/news/other/a-single-lightning-bolt-killed-21-cows-in-south-dakota/ar-BBtH109>

John Metcalfe 1 day ago



© Provided by CityLab Moody County Sheriff's Office

So far this year, five people in the U.S. have died from lightning—some after working outside, others while riding a horse or picnicking with family.

Cattle have fared worse. Last week alone, 21 cows in South Dakota made the grave error of gathering around a metal feeder while storms loomed. A single bolt hit the feeder, electrifying the animals and killing them all on the spot.

The grim aftermath—a circle of bovine carcasses reminiscent of some dark ritual—is pictured in the above photo from the Moody County Sheriff's Office. The department's representative on Facebook writes:

This is a very strong reminder of what Lightning can do. This was somewhere in McCook County last night. There is 21 head of cattle that were around this metal bale feeder when it was hit with one bolt of [lightning] and it killed them all. That is about \$45,000 worth of loss. As the severe weather starts to roll in this summer please keep this in mind. If you start to see lightning and hear thunder you need to get out of the open. Off of the Lakes, off of the Golf Course etc so that you are safe. And standing under a tree is not a safe place either.

Cattle and other farm animals are often the unheralded casualties of severe weather. A dozen more cows were killed by lightning last week while they huddled under a tree in Missouri, and last summer a thunderstorm laid waste to 33 others at a farm in Mississippi. Sometimes the animals get lucky, though—and none more so than "Sparky the Bison," who absorbed a 2013 lightning strike to his hump (likely in Iowa) and came out standing, albeit with a nasty scar.



© Provided by CityLab Karen Viste-Sparkman/USFWS

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Little girl, rose still in hand, found in coffin beneath SF home

By Steve Rubenstein

Updated 6:23 pm, Wednesday, May 25, 2016

sfgate.com

SFGATE <http://www.sfgate.com/bayarea/article/Little-girl-rose-still-in-hand-found-in-coffin-7943552.php>



The coffin of a girl who was about 3 when she died 145 years ago, was found during a remodel in S.F.
Photo: Courtesy Of Elissa Davey



The coffin of a girl who was about 3 when she died 145 years ago, was found during a remodel in S.F.



The coffin of a little girl, found buried beneath a San Francisco home.

She has long blond hair, she is holding a red rose and she has been

dead for 145 years.

Nobody knows her name or how she died. She lay under a San Francisco home's concrete garage floor for decades until two weeks ago, when workers doing remodeling struck her lead-and-bronze coffin with their shovels.



The coffin of a little girl, found buried beneath a San Francisco home.

And so begins a tale of death, love, San Francisco history and the staying power of a coffin maker who knew what he was doing.

On May 9, workers at the home in the Lone Mountain neighborhood in the Richmond District discovered the casket and called authorities.

The unidentified girl, who appeared to be about 3, is believed to be one of about 30,000 people who were buried at the old Odd Fellows Cemetery in San Francisco. The bodies were moved to a common burial plot in Colma around 1920, after all the city's graveyards were ordered closed to make way for the living.

Somehow, the workers in charge of moving the Odd Fellows occupants left this girl behind.

Flowers in hair

She was from a family of means, as indicated by the high-end coffin and by the fancy sealing

job by the undertaker that preserved her skin and hair and her burial flowers. She looks, through the two glass windows of the coffin, like a young girl and not like the 145-year-old remains of one.

SFGate-Little Girl, Rose Still in Hand, Found in Coffin Beneath SF home

Clutched in her right hand is the rose. Weaved in her curly blond hair are lavender flowers. Placed over her heart is a cross made of more lavender. Lying beside her are eucalyptus leaves.

"She's wearing a long white dress," said Elissa Davey, the founder of the Garden of Innocence charity that, for two decades, has buried the bodies of unidentified children in California. Davey estimates that the girl died about 145 years ago because the cemetery was active from 1860 to 1890.

Homeowner's problem

The owner of the home, Ericka Karner, quickly found herself in a bind. The medical examiner's office told her the body was her responsibility, even though the error that left the coffin beneath her garage was not. The body was now on private property, and the private property was hers.

An investigator for the medical examiner's office confirmed its staff had been summoned following the discovery but did not take custody of the remains.

Karner said she called one Colma undertaker and was quoted a price of \$7,000. She called an East Bay archaeological company that handles historic artifacts and was quoted a price of \$22,000.

"It didn't seem right," said Karner, who markets cookies for a living and whose family has lived in the home since 1976. "I understand if a tree is on your property, that's your responsibility. But this is different. The city decided to move all these bodies 100 years ago, and they should stand behind their decision."

'Somebody's child'

But Karner said she wanted to do the right thing, seeing as how the girl "was part of our family now." She said the medical examiner's office had broken the meticulously sealed casket to examine the body and that "time was beginning to be a factor," though a medical examiner's spokesman said that only the covers over the coffin's windows had been removed.

In desperation, with the coffin lying above ground in her backyard, Karner called authorities at City Hall. They put her in touch with Davey.

"That girl was somebody's child," Davey said. "You have to do the right thing."

Davey contacted the Odd Fellows, who agreed to supply the necessary funds. And then

Davey, who works out of her office near San Diego, arranged for the body to be picked up and stored, temporarily, in a mortuary refrigerator in Fresno.

"We had to pick her up," said Davey, whose organization has arranged for the burials of 327 unidentified children at 11 cemeteries and other plots of land throughout California. "If people find out she's lying at a construction site with no one around at night, you can bet somebody is going to steal her. People into the macabre. Into witchcraft. I wanted her out of there."

Davey hired her niece to construct a second coffin, made of maple, large enough to hold the body and the original coffin.

"I don't want her disturbed any more," Davey said. "She's been disturbed enough."

Next week, Davey will come to San Francisco for a meeting with representatives of the Odd Fellows to arrange for a reburial for the girl, who has tentatively been given the name of Miranda.

"She'll go home with the love of the community," said Davey. "That's all we want."

Steve Rubenstein is a San Francisco Chronicle staff writer. Email: srubenstein@sfchronicle.com

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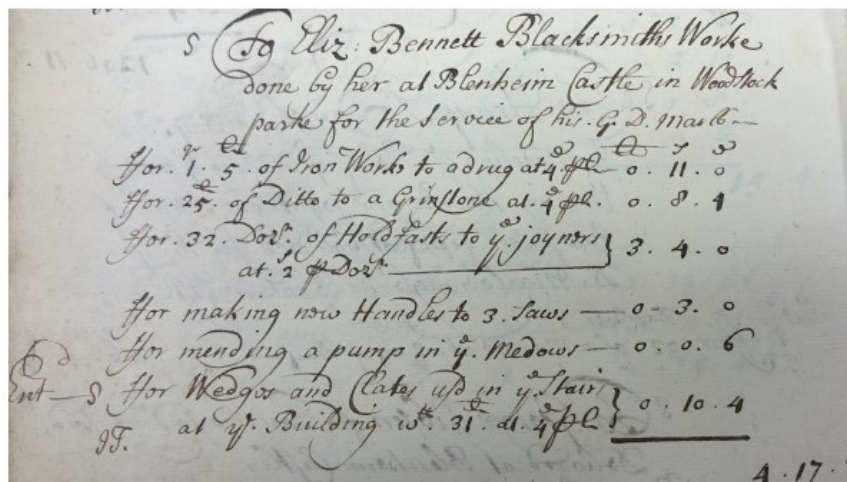
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A Bodleian Libraries blog

Percy Manning (1870-1917), an Oxfordshire antiquarian, archaeologist, and local historian, bequeathed his collection of drawings and prints, photos and detailed notes on everything from sports and pastimes to local folklore (and much more besides) to the Bodleian Library, while his archaeological collections went to the Ashmolean and Pitt Rivers Museums.

To mark the upcoming centenary of his death, the Bodleian is contributing to a mapping project that will pinpoint these collections against the places they relate to, and this involves adding more details to our existing catalogue.

This collection is full of delights, from 18th-century prints of rural idylls that are now thoroughly built-up Oxford suburbs to detailed notes on Oxfordshire dialect words and obscure local festivals.



MS. Top. Oxon. c. 230, fol. 45v – Click to enlarge

And this pleasing thing, the last entry in a 1708 account book that records building and landscaping work done on the then-unfinished Blenheim Palace in Woodstock, Oxfordshire, only 3 years into what would be an eyewateringly expensive 29-year construction project.

An account of blacksmithing work done in December 1708 by Eliz[abeth] Bennett at Blenheim 'Castle', her job included making 32 dozen holdfasts for the joiners (at 2 shillings a dozen), making

new handles for three saws, mending a pump in the meadows, and making wedges and clouts (patches or plates) used in the stairs. But in addition to making items for a fixed price, she also charged for work by the pound weight. Twenty five pounds of iron works for a grindstone at 4 pence a pound earned her 8s 4d (100 pence total) and 31 pounds of wedges and clouts, also at 4 pence a pound, made her 10s 4d.

The total for what would have been several days or weeks of highly skilled work? 4 pounds, 17 shillings, 2 pence. Not bad at all if you compare it to a female servant's income at about that time – maidservant Sarah Sherin made £4 a year in 1717, while in the farming world, a female labourer called Goody Currell was paid 4 pence a day at an Oxfordshire farm in 1759, fifty years later.

Elizabeth appears three times in this account book, which only covers the outlay on Blenheim from October to December 1708. In October (fol. 9v) she had a more lucrative commission, earning a handsome £8 12s 9d doing very similar work, including another 12 dozen holdfasts (this time, puzzlingly, at a mere 6d per dozen, a quarter of the amount charged in December – perhaps they were a simpler design?). She also made small cramps at 3½d per pound: over two hundredweight of small cramps which, needless to say, is a lot of small cramps, earning her £3 19s 0d.

Nothing has made me so grateful for decimalisation as checking the maths of an early modern accountant. Elizabeth made precisely 2 hundredweight, 1 quarter, and 19 pounds of small cramps in October. That's an astonishing 271 pounds of metal work. 3½d per pound earns her 948½ pence. And with 240 pence in a pound (20 shillings in a pound, 12 pence in a shilling) that's... well, have fun working

that one out. By my reckoning it comes to £3 19s and 0.4d, so they seem to have shorted her a farthing or so. I had the benefit of a digital calculator, however. Kudos to Mr Henry Joynes, the architect who signed off on these accounts.

In November, Elizabeth made over £14 making more small cramps (a lot more – 767 pounds total) and 12 'gudgeons', which the Oxford English Dictionary tells me means:

A pivot, usually of metal, fixed on or let into the end of a beam, spindle, axle, etc., and on which a wheel turns, a bell swings, or the like

But how much would a male blacksmith have been making? Well, luckily, the account book also has entries for a John Silver, Blacksmith, who earned himself the grand sum of £46 9s 9d in October, and then £12 9s 9d in December. Interestingly, however, he was paid exactly the same pound rate of 4d to make wedges and clouts (but was paid 4d a pound to make holdfasts for the joiners, rather than being paid by the dozen). Plus he, like Elizabeth, was paid 3½d per pound to make small cramps. Was this a smiths' guild-mandated price? Or perhaps the result of a tendering process: did Elizabeth and John simply offer the lowest bids? Would they have charged more than this usually, or about the same?



Poster for the 1898 National Exhibition of Women's Labour, Netherlands (Gemeentemuseum, The Hague).
Uploaded to wikicommons by Jan Toorop.

And as for who Elizabeth Bennett was? An interesting puzzle! It isn't so unusual to come across craftsmen in this period and earlier – there's a picture of a woman forging a nail in the 14th-century Holkham Bible – and the work of women silversmiths like Hester Bateman is extremely collectible to this day. Like Hester, it's likely that Elizabeth was a widow carrying on her husband's trade, but there are no Bennetts listed on this (very unofficial) directory of Oxfordshire blacksmiths, and no Bennetts working near Oxfordshire either. Perhaps she was a member of a local craft guild – possibly an Oxford guild? – but surviving records are poor (although a good chunk of the what's left is, conveniently enough, here at the Bodleian). Perhaps she took an apprentice after 1710, in which case, there should be a registration record. And there's always parish records, of course, to try and track down her baptism and death dates, and any marriages. I for one, would love to know more!

Oxford by the Sea? 8 May 2014 In "17th century"

Rediscovering Rycote 22 October 2013 In "16th century"

Monkey spines and Ringworm cultures, or: With a little help from the experts 9 May 2016 In "20th century"

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'Loch Ness Monster' video shows 'humps moving through water'

09:58, 8 Jun 2016 Updated 09:59, 8 Jun 2016 By Jon Livesey

mirror.co.uk



'Loch Ness Monster' footage shows 'mythical creature's humps moving through water

A tourist might have recorded conclusive evidence that the Loch Ness Monster DOES exist after filming 'humps' moving through the water in perfect unison.

Tony Bligh was visiting the loch in the Scottish Highlands for the first time on Wednesday June 1, when something "unusual" on the water caught his eye.

He said there appeared to be four or five humps, around 6ft apart, moving together through the water - which he decided to film on his camera.

Mr Bligh, who was in the Wellington layby on the A82, said: "I was at the top of the steps when I noticed something out on the water about three-quarters out."



SWNS

Tony Bligh recorded 'humps' moving through the water of Loch Ness

He told the Inverness Courier: "It was quite long. The humps were consistently the same length apart. I don't know what it was. It was very unusual."

A boat was about 400 yards away from the 'humps', noted Mr Bligh.

Intrigued, he and his friend, Annie Hawkes, showed the footage to staff in

VisitScotland's Inverness office, who he says were "really excited by it"

However, Adrian Shine, of the Loch Ness Project, which gathers scientific information on the loch's ecology and the potential for a monster, wasn't convinced.

Experts say the 'humps' were created by the wake of a boat

He maintained it was an optical illusion created by the wake of a boat.



SWNS

"It is a particularly good example of the effect that a reasonably high boat wake can make," he added.

"It shows how powerful this illusion could be. It produces a line of very solid looking humps."

Mr Bligh, from Dublin, Ireland, added: "I am tending towards the wake of a boat – I am an engineer and I am on the side of logic," he said.

Comments

(edited)11 hours ago

LarryBurks

This just in, woman sees waves and freaks out. Has no clue to their origin...

(edited)16 hours ago

Imperviousrabbit

Just waves..

(edited)22 hours ago

Whatshisname

Waves bouncing off the shore. Gives the impression of water moving against the wind.

Happens quite a few times on the Loch. Plenty of similar pictures about, always taken when the water is choppy.

(edited)23 hours ago

MisterToad

A blurry photo of choppy water. I'm convinced.

(edited)23 hours ago

macdaddypastyman

That proves it then! I'm off to Hull to find that werewolf.

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The Lost Secret Sign Language of Sawmill Workers

atlasobscura.com

In the 1970s, sawmill workers could talk about technical matters or insult each other in their own special sign language.

by Sarah Laskow
June 01, 2016



A sawmill in the 1970s. (Photo: Tomas Sennett/NARA 545925) A sawmill in the 1970s. (Photo: Tomas Sennett/NARA 545925) Inside a sawmill in 1960. (Photo: NARA 2131702) Inside a sawmill in 1960. (Photo: NARA 2131702) Four of the signs the researchers recorded. (Image: Diana Philpott, *A Dictionary of Sawmill Workers' Signs*) Four of the signs the researchers recorded. (Image: Diana Philpott, *A Dictionary of Sawmill Workers' Signs*) Lumber at a yard in 1973. (Photo: NARA 553647) Lumber at a yard in 1973. (Photo: NARA 553647)

When the linguists Martin Meissner and Stuart Philpott first started visiting sawmills in British Columbia in the 1970s, they thought they'd find workers communicating without speaking, probably with some simple gestures that contained technical information. There was a long history of such communication in the face of extreme noise: For centuries, American mill workers had used systems of hand signals to tell each other, across the unending roar of the saws, how to cut wood.

What they discovered, though, floored them. The researchers witnessed a sign language system complete enough that workers could call each other "you crazy old farmer," tell a colleague that he was

"full of crap," or tell each other when the foreman was "fucking around over there."

Outside of deaf communities, hearing people sometimes develop what are now often called "alternate sign languages" to communicate when words will not do. In monasteries, monks uses signs to communicate in areas where speech is forbidden, for instance. In industries where machines made speaking impossible—in ships' engine rooms, in steel mills, textile mills, and sawmills—workers also found ways to communicate with their hands.

In 1955, when *Popular Mechanics* covered these industrial sign languages, many were already disappearing. But in the 1970s, Meissner and Philpott found a sign language still used in sawmills. Their research further honed in on the culture of one particular mill where workers had developed a system of 157 signs that they used not just to communicate about their work but to trade small talk, tell crude jokes and tease each other.

The linguist were struck by the language's "ingenuity and elegance," they wrote. It was also a secret hidden in plain sight: the mill workers' bosses, it seems, had almost no idea what they were saying.



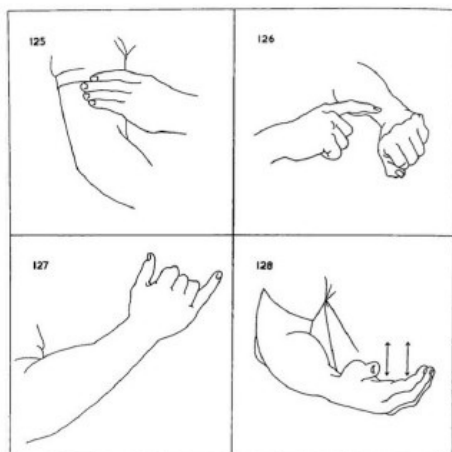
A sawmill in the 1970s. (Photo: Tomas Sennett/NARA 545925) A sawmill in the 1970s. (Photo: Tomas Sennett/NARA 545925) Inside a sawmill in 1960. (Photo: NARA 2131702) Inside a sawmill in 1960. (Photo: NARA 2131702) Four of the signs the researchers recorded. (Image: Diana Philpott, A Dictionary of Sawmill Workers' Signs) Four of the signs the researchers recorded. (Image: Diana Philpott, A Dictionary of Sawmill Workers' Signs) Lumber at a yard in 1973. (Photo: NARA 553647) Lumber at a yard in 1973. (Photo: NARA 553647)

The core of the sawmill workers' sign language was a system of numbers, standardized across the industry. Those signs were shared in a technical notebook, and, the linguists wrote, "in the view of the management, that was about all there was to the language." But it covered much more ground than technical communication. Workers could talk about quitting time, lunch time, and cigarette breaks. They could talk about sports and the bets they placed on games. They could talk about their wives, cars, and colleagues. They could tell jokes and comment on what was going on around them without their bosses ever knowing.

In one conversation that Meissner and Philpott recorded, one worker pointed out the boss, by signing "Big shot there," and noted that he was with three women. The worker also commented that one of the women had a great figure and "then drew a rectangle with his index finger and

pointed to the head sawyer's operating cubicle, wanting to liken the woman he described to the calendar nude behind the sawyer," the researchers wrote. "She's my girlfriend," he told the others.

Some of the signs were transparent enough. To ask "What time is it?" or "How long?" a worker would tap his wrist (sign 126 below). Others had straight-forward associations: the sign for "woman" (128 below) was an up-and-down movement "suggesting a woman's breast," the researchers wrote. Some would have been much harder to guess, though: clutching a bicep was the sign for both "weak" and "week" (125 below).



A sawmill in the 1970s. (Photo: Tomas Sennett/NARA 545925) A sawmill in the 1970s. (Photo: Tomas Sennett/NARA 545925)

There were some social rules governing how these signs were used. All the workers learned the technical signs, but the whole corpus of the language took about six months to master and not everyone managed it. The conversational signs were more likely to be used by people who'd worked together for a few years and had similar status, education and ethnic background. It was also more popular with men who didn't mind everyone knowing what they had to say.

Compared to a fully developed sign language, which can have thousands of signs, this one was limited in its scope. It did provide these men with a way to cover the basic grounds of collegial small talk, and in at least one case, sawmill sign language also worked in the home. A

Inside a sawmill in 1960. (Photo: NARA 2131702) Inside a sawmill in 1960. (Photo: NARA 2131702) Four of the signs the researchers recorded. (Image: Diana Philpott, A Dictionary of Sawmill Workers' Signs) Four of the signs the researchers recorded. (Image: Diana Philpott, A Dictionary of Sawmill Workers' Signs) Lumber at a yard in 1973. (Photo: NARA 553647) Lumber at a yard in 1973. (Photo: NARA 553647)



A sawmill in the 1970s. (Photo: Tomas Sennett/NARA 545925) A sawmill in the 1970s. (Photo: Tomas Sennett/NARA 545925) Inside a sawmill in 1960. (Photo: NARA 2131702) Inside a sawmill in 1960. (Photo: NARA 2131702) Four of the signs the researchers recorded. (Image: Diana Philpott, A Dictionary of Sawmill Workers' Signs) Four of the signs the researchers recorded. (Image: Diana Philpott, A Dictionary of Sawmill Workers' Signs) Lumber at a yard in 1973. (Photo: NARA 553647) Lumber at a yard in 1973. (Photo: NARA 553647)

couple of years after Meissner and Philpott published their research on British Columbia's mills, another linguist, Robert Johnson, found a retired sawmill worker in Oregon who had lost his hearing and used a variant on sawmill sign language to communicate with his wife and son, who was also deaf. About three-quarters of their corpus of 250 signs overlapped with the British Columbia sawmill signs Meissner and Philpott had collected. There was also significant overlap with American Sign Language.

The family used their particular sign language to communicate about the grist of daily life; they had signs for quiet, mirror, eat, shave, stink, happy, deer, fish, church, baby and so on. They never learned ASL because no one around them used it and their system of signs worked well enough. There were shortcomings, though.

"When it comes to feelings, you have real problems," the wife told the *Eugene Register-Guard*. "You can say you're angry...But other feelings are so subtle and complex...." Her solution: just write them down.

When visiting sawmills and other industrial settings, Meissner and Philpott noticed another trend. Where there was more automation, hand signals were less likely to be used. They predicted that as automation in factories increased, the use of sign language would decrease. In other, less noisy industries, radios and walkie-talkies already were limiting the need for hand signals, previously an advantage over shouting. Today, it's rare, if not impossible to find reports of site-specific sign languages being used in factories.

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Thailand's Intriguing 'Luk Thep' Doll Culture

Kenneth Bachor

time.com

Time.com

"They believe if they take care of the *luk thep* doll, luck will come to them"

Thailand's Intriguing *Luk Thep* Doll Culture



Amanda Mustard

Millionaire, one of Mama Ning's favorite Luk Thep dolls on March 17, 2016.

1 of 15

The phenomenon of Thailand's *luk thep* dolls reached viral status in January 2016, when Thai Smile Airways started to allow passengers to purchase seats and meals for their realistic dolls. *Luk thep*, which translates to *child angel*, resemble American Girl, or Reborn dolls, and have become an intriguing part of Thai culture to the outside world.



"If you want good fortune for your business or family," says Bangkok-based photojournalist Amanda Mustard, who has been documenting *luk thep*'s popularity, "[the owners] believe if they take care of the *luk thep* doll, luck will come to them." There are various degrees to an owner's participation, some will simply keep the doll in their business and not take it home, whereas others go as far as feeding and changing their dolls, hiring a babysitter, and setting up group playdates, according to Mustard. Certain restaurants in Thailand have even offered a special *luk thep* menu, with meals for the dolls.



It's difficult to point out when the popularity of *luk thep* exactly started. Last year, Thai radio personality DJ Bookko began to include his *luk thep* doll Wan Sai during public appearances



and on social media. A central figure in the *luk thep* movement has been Mama Ning, a woman who claims to be the mother of *luk thep* — and who allegedly started the trend around five years ago. Her followers, who she refers to as disciples, are a group of about a dozen women who follow her leadership and teachings in *luk thep*. Ning is also one of the people that makes the dolls and customizes them, before people adopt the dolls from her. Adoption is seen as a spiritual process, in which Ning

matches the owners with their *luk thep*, Mustard observed.



bookko • 4 months ago

Follow



To certain *luk thep* owners, the dolls can be seen as a source for a family to stay focused, and as something therapeutic to overcome obstacles and addictions, such as alcoholism.

Historically, lucky symbols and items have been a large part of Thai traditions and ancient folklore. Similar to *luk thep* dolls, *kuman thong*, which were once made from stillborn-baby bodies, are figurines that if treated well, will bring good luck to their owner. “There’s a lot of overlap with animism, Taoism and Hinduism, which is where the *luk thep* come in,” says Mustard. “Many people wear amulets for various purposes of bringing good fortune and merit and I think the *luk thep* dolls are just an extension of that.”

Mustard recalls her first sighting of one of the dolls when she walking through a parking lot. “I thought this woman in front of me was carrying a baby,” she says. “I was taken aback seeing that it was actually a doll.” Seeming to notice the dolls more often, it piqued her interest: “I just wanted to know more for myself, and it grew into this project.”

In March 2016, Mustard had the opportunity to attend Mama Ning’s *wai khru* ceremony, which is a traditional gathering in Thai culture where students pay respects to their teacher. There, she met a family that had just adopted a doll named Natalie. “It was a husband and wife and they brought their son, who was maybe 8 or 9 with them,” she says. “The family said they recently got Natalie, because they wanted to have a daughter and they couldn’t, so this was helping them.”

But, with the increased media attention, the *luk thep* community has experienced a backlash

with some Thai people suggesting that the doll owners were mentally ill. Everyday sightings of the dolls have become increasingly rare, with additional claims from Thai police that the dolls may be used by Thai drug smugglers, the *Economist* reports. "For whatever reason [the owners] may not be interested in taking care of the *luk thep* anymore. They often turn the dolls over to a temple," says Mustard as any objects that might have held a spirit can't be discarded.

Amanda Mustard is a photographer based in Bangkok. She is a founding member of the *Koan Collective*, a group of emerging photographers pursuing careers in a changing media landscape through collaboration and collegial support.

Kenneth Bachor is *TIME*'s associate photo editor, overseeing entertainment and culture.

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Man accused of carving girlfriend in 'vampire' murder

wnd.com

<http://www.wnd.com/2016/06/man-accused-of-carving-girlfriend-in-vampire-murder/>

'All of her blood was drained from her body'

Published: 4 days ago

(NYPOST) — The heir to a Canadian real estate fortune pleaded not guilty to carving up his girlfriend and leaving her bloodless body behind in their West Hollywood apartment.

Struggling screenwriter Blake Leibel, the 35-year-old son of a Toronto tycoon, is facing the death penalty for the first-degree murder of his gal pal, Iana Kasian, who was found lifeless in their barricaded home.

"Kasian was tortured and mutilated before she was killed and all of her blood was drained from her body," prosecutor Tannaz Mokayef said after Tuesday's court appearance.

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The Man Who Lived with the Fairies? - Beachcombing's Bizarre History Blog strangehistory.net

The outlandish, the anomalous and the curious from the last five thousand years

The Man Who Lived with the Fairies? June 3, 2016

Author: Beach Combing | in : Modern , [trackback](#)

A MAN WHO LIVED WITH THE FAIRIES.—The course of the way between Budworth and Utkinton was brought into dispute, it would seem, by the story of one Lawrence Billinge. He kept on repeating that he had companied with the fairies about seven years and they had told him that the house in which he had lived as tenant of Mr. Egerton was really upon Mr. Talbot's lands. In consequence, it seems, it was decided to hold an inquiry; witnesses declared that the road was the boundary between the two estates, and the commissioners appear to have been ashamed to go on when they found that the fairies were the only witnesses alleged to have said that a house on Egerton's side of the road was in Talbot's land. As the fairies could not be produced the case ended. See Chester Recognizance Roll 239 (1577-78), m. 2.

north-western fairies

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Here is a fairy reference that is worth spending some time over. In 1919 a northwestern English scholar published this short note. In academic terms it translates into, 'look I don't have time for this nonsense but somewhere out there someone will be interested and, God knows, this is out of the ordinary'. No one ever took the anonymous writer on the challenge so let's relaunch his appeal:

A Man Who Lived with the Fairies. — The course of the way between Budworth and Utkinton was brought into

Lawrence seems to have been a fairy-seer, a man who could (or alleged he could) communicate with the fairies. He used this reputation to claim that his true landlord was not the guy who turned up for rent. This is less curious though than the claim that he had 'companied with the fairies about seven years'. 'Companied' is not a routine modern English word and so was probably taken over from the original Roll. The author of the note took 'companied' to mean that Lawrence had actually lived with the fairies: see the title. Perhaps it meant, rather, that he had 'hung out' with the same? Note the magical seven years: perhaps an apprenticeship — if you are sceptical there are other examples of seven years in this context. In any case, it is remarkable, first, that he claimed this and did not get in trouble from the local ecclesiastical court (a hundred years later it would have been a different matter); and second that his claims sparked a legal inquiry in which witnesses were called to mark out the boundaries between the two territories.

Source: Transactions of the Historic Society of Cheshire and Lancashire 71 (1919), 92 and the CRR's are at the National Archives. **Can anyone help get them:** drbeachcoming@yahoo.com

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Rainforest activist walks on broken glass with four snakes in his mouth

upi.com

http://www.upi.com/Odd_News/2016/06/06/Rainforest-activist-walks-on-broken-glass-with-four-snakes-in-his-mouth/4061465232475/

By Ben Hooper | June 6, 2016 at 1:13 PM

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A man with four snakes in his mouth prepares to walk over broken glass in Brazil. Screenshot: Newsflare

BELEM, Brazil, June 6 (UPI) -- A Brazilian activist filmed himself walking across broken glass while holding five snakes in his mouth to raise awareness of deforestation.

Arteval Duarte, an activist promoting preservation of the Amazon Rainforest, filmed himself holding the tails of five

living snakes in his mouth while walking across a trail of broken glass in the state of Para.

Duarte often involves snakes in his demonstrations and calls himself "The Ninja of Serpents."

The activist previously released a video online showing him holding the heads of four live snakes in his mouth to raise awareness of the Amazon's plight.

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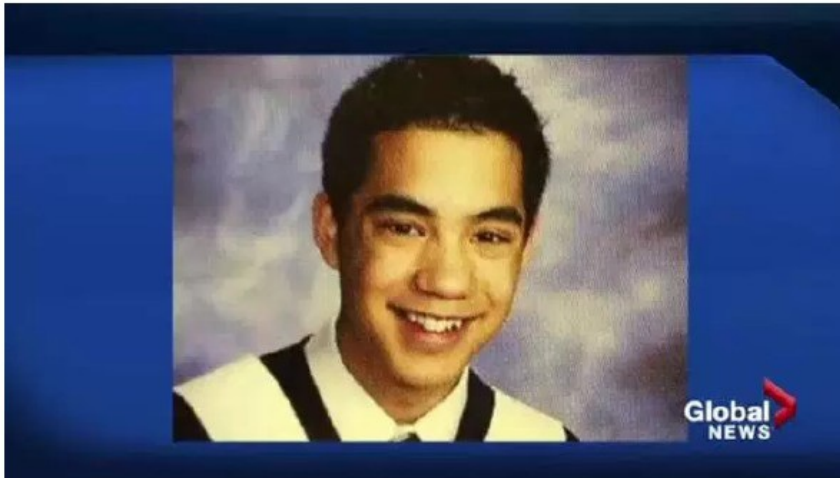
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globalnews.ca

May 25, 2016 4:00 am

Updated: May 25, 2016 7:42 pm

By Erika Tucker and Nancy Hixt Global News

**DISTURBING CONTENT:**

This story contains descriptions of graphic violence. Discretion is strongly advised.

Matthew de Grood has been found not criminally responsible (NCR) in the stabbing deaths of five young people, after a judge ruled he had "lost touch with reality" at

a 2014 house party in Calgary's Brentwood neighbourhood.

"I take responsibility for these deaths...the victims never deserved to die," defence lawyer Allan Fay said, reading a letter written by de Grood after the verdict came down.

"I am truly and deeply sorry for what I've done."

NCR applies to those who are found to have committed an act that constitutes an offence, but cannot appreciate or understand what they did was wrong due to a mental disorder at the time.



Zackariah Rathwell, 21, Jordan Segura, 22, Josh Hunter, 23, Kaitlin Perras, 23, and Lawrence Hong, 27, were stabbed to death at a house party on April 15, 2014.

De Grood sat in the prisoner's box with his head down, sometimes looking up at Justice Eric Macklin as he read his judgment Wednesday. His parents,

along with the families of the five victims, also listened carefully to the judgment. Many family members cried as the verdict was delivered and de Grood's statement was read.

In his decision, Macklin reviewed information from an agreed statement of facts, emphasizing

de Grood talked about “crazy theories” and that his “dominating thought was the world was ending at midnight.” Macklin noted de Grood told people at the party he was getting ready for the “apocalypse” and was watching for the moon to turn red.

He repeated what court heard earlier in the trial: that de Grood ate garlic at the party, fearing vampires, and reiterated de Grood had “superhero-like strength” as police arrested him.



Macklin then reviewed the mental health assessments of de Grood, including testimony from three independent experts that suggested he suffered from a psychotic illness, delusions, and most likely, schizophrenia. Macklin added de Grood was certified under the Mental Health Act after his arrest.

Macklin said experts were



unanimous in thinking he suffered from a psychotic episode, and accepted their opinion that de Grood suffered from a mental disorder at the time of the killings.

“He did not know or appreciate his actions were morally wrong,” Macklin said.

Judge allows families to read tributes during Matthew de Grood murder trial

Prior to delivering the verdict itself, Macklin emphasized the law around an NCR ruling ensures people who have mental disorders are

treated, not punished. He said an NCR verdict is not an acquittal, and that if there’s a risk to the public, steps will be taken to secure the person in question.

Macklin called it a “difficult and tragic case” and praised the defence and prosecution for their sensitive approach.

“You have honoured their memories,” Macklin said, referring to the victims. To de Grood, he said: “I wish you good luck.”

De Grood will be detained in a psychiatric facility pending instructions by the Alberta Review Board. Court extended the timeframe to 90 days for the board’s first hearing.

Fay said de Grood will remain at the Southern Alberta Forensic Psychiatry Centre, or another such centre, until such time “if it ever occurs” that the Alberta Review Board deems he’s no longer a significant risk.



"If they ever reach that point, then I hope that there would be gradual reintegration into society," Fay said. "But if they don't reach that position, he could spend the rest of his life in custody."

The 24-year-old pleaded not guilty to five counts of first-degree murder Monday.

The Crown referred to de Grood as a "killing machine" Tuesday, and said the murders were done with "brutality and ruthless efficiency." However, Crown prosecutor Neil Wiberg agreed with the defence, saying de Grood should be found NCR.

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Trial set for Matthew de Grood in Brentwood slayings

Daryl Slade, Calgary Herald More from Daryl Slade, Calgary Herald

calgaryherald.com



Photo of Matthew de Grood. Calgary Herald

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A two-week jury

trial has been set for next year for a young Calgary man facing five counts of first-degree murder in the city's worst mass slaying in history.

Court of Queen's Bench Justice David Gates set the trial on Friday morning to begin May 16, 2016, for Matthew de Grood, 23.

Gates ordered that the case be heard by an out-of-town judge, at the request of both counsel, as the accused's father is a high-ranking city police officer. He said he may have to testify and they wanted to avoid any potential bias.

Lawyer Allan Fay, who represents de Grood, said he and Crown prosecutor Neil Wiberg have had discussions to narrow down issues and he is confident the trial can be completed in two weeks.

He said a number of admissions will be made to reduce the length of what the trial could have otherwise been. He also said the issue of whether his client was not criminally responsible will be at the forefront.

"I don't want to commit on that. There are any number of issues and that certainly will become an issue," said Fay.

"This matter involves the son of a city police service member and they want to make sure, as anybody would, there is no appearance of any bias that a judge may have, because his father may have to testify, and the judge may know his father."

Crown prosecutor Neil Wiberg of Edmonton said the issue of mental capacity at the time will be up to the defence to present to court.

He said he has spoken frequently to the victims' family members and they are pleased a trial date has been set.

Wiberg said the case is unique in that there are five homicides and what is “really troubling is the way and manner that it happened.”

“Everybody’s heart is broken,” said the prosecutor. “Because of the quality of individuals and the fact they were murdered at such a young age.

“The fact it is five makes it extraordinary.”

De Grood, 23, is accused of fatally stabbing Lawrence Hong, Josh Hunter, Kaitlin Perras, Zackariah Rathwell and Jordan Segura on April 15, 2014, during a get-together celebrating the last day of classes at the University of Calgary.

His parents, including Insp. Doug de Grood, were present in court for the brief hearing.

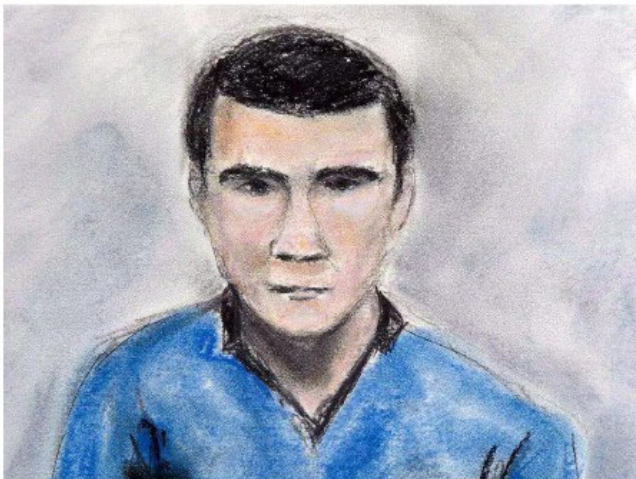
Fay said his client and his parents are looking forward to moving the case ahead.

“He’s doing as well as can be expected,” Fay said. “Everybody involved in this, whether Mr. de Grood or the family and friends, want this to move forward.

The accused was ordered to stand trial on March 6 following a weeklong preliminary hearing.

Meanwhile, a judge’s recent decision gave the public access to previously sealed court documents connected to the multiple killing in the northwest community of Brentwood, but a publication ban prevents anyone from disseminating their contents until the suspect goes on trial.

Provincial court Judge Timothy Hironaka said his ruling is an attempt to strike a balance between the constitutionally grounded principle of keeping the courts open to the public, while at the same time ensuring a fair trial for de Grood.



A sketch of Matthew de Grood, appearing in a Calgary court on Tuesday April 22, 2014. Janice Fletcher / THE CANADIAN PRESS

The Calgary Herald, CBC Calgary, Global Calgary, CTV Calgary and the Globe and Mail petitioned the court for access to affidavits filed by police in support of search warrants obtained in pursuit of their case against de Grood.

It is common for media outlets to seek documents filed in connection with major court cases as a way of evaluating the prosecution’s evidence and examining how the case was investigated.

In this case, the Herald and the other media applicants argued that potential jurors are able to distinguish unproven allegations published before trial from evidence that is presented inside

the courtroom during a trial.

Lawyers representing Alberta Justice and the Calgary Police Service opposed the media's application, arguing that publishing the documents' contents could taint the jury pool. Police also petitioned the court on behalf of the victims' families, arguing that unsealing the documents prior to the trial would be an undue invasion of their privacy and that of witnesses.

Hironaka's ruling allowing the unsealing of the documents came with a condition: that the names of any witnesses and their identifying information must be removed before they are made available for viewing.

Making a publication ban part of Hironaka's order will ensure de Grood will get a fair trial, said Crown prosecutor Neil Wiberg, who represented Alberta Justice.

dslade@calgaryherald.com

[Twitter.com/heraldcourt](https://twitter.com/heraldcourt)

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Stone age cities: what modern urbanites could learn from paleolithic humans

Gustav Milne
Monday 23 May 2016

theguardian.com

Stone age cities: what modern urbanites could learn from paleolithic humans

However 'civilised' we may now consider ourselves to be, biologically we remain much as we were before we began farming and moved into cities. Can we create a healthier future by returning to our paleolithic past?



We may have moved to the city but the inherent violence of the hunter lives on in urban street gangs.

Photograph: Alamy Stock Photo A daily walk is essential to keep in touch with your paleolithic roots and overcome the negative effects of urbanisation.

Photograph: Alamy The Midnight Basketball League in the US started as a way to control inner-city crime by engaging young people in sport. Photograph: AllSport via Getty

The city is not our natural habitat. For the last three million years, we evolved as hunter-gatherers, living in small tribal societies, breathing fresh air, drinking fresh water and eating fresh foods. But more than half of us now live in cities. Culturally, our society is transforming, but anatomically, our genetic evolution is slower: we remain much as we were even before large-scale farming was adopted 5,000–10,000 years ago.

However "civilised" we may now consider ourselves to be, biologically we are much closer to our stone age ancestors. There is a major mismatch between our modern urbanised world and our "paleolithic genome", the genetic material encoded in our DNA, which supports an ancient hunter-gatherer lifestyle.

Put simply, urbanisation – which began with the advent of farming – is bad for us. Studies of skeletal remains in cemetery sites show that when the Romans introduced town life to Britain 2,000 years ago, they also introduced us to scurvy, rickets, osteomalacia, Reiter's syndrome, gout, ankylosing spondylitis, rheumatoid arthritis, psoriatic arthritis, septic arthritis, tuberculosis, osteitis, poliomyelitis and leprosy. And today, the most common causes of death in half of our urban populations are obesity, cardiovascular diseases, type 2 diabetes, atherosclerosis, high blood pressure and various cancers. It is a sobering thought that all these conditions are rare or non-existent in non-urban societies, such as the tribal communities in Kitava, Papua New Guinea.

But all is not lost. We can help our society have a healthier future by returning to our paleolithic past.

Physiology

Paleolithically "correct" urban living and city planning requires more than just changing to a proxy ancestral diet (fish, meat, fresh fruit and vegetables, and avoiding added sugars) as is

- LePharaon

12h ago

"According to the Metropolitan police, there are at least 225 gangs in London, 58 of which account for two-thirds of the gang crime. An urban street gang is basically a paleolithic hunting group, with powerful bonding and adherence to a very particular territory."

Except that in paleolithic times the indigenous ones probably didn't welcome and encourage outside hunting groups to take territory in their area, while saying they were needed. The concept of a fifth column hadn't been invented.

- IentoonLePharaon

12h ago

The award for forcing an immigration argument into something completely unrelated because you can't get down off your monomaniacal hobby horse goes to...

- Paolobear

13h ago

when the Romans introduced town life to Britain 2,000 years ago, they also introduced us to scurvy, rickets, osteomalacia, Reiter's syndrome, gout, ankylosing spondylitis, rheumatoid arthritis, psoriatic arthritis, septic arthritis, tuberculosis, osteitis, poliomyelitis and leprosy.

Reg: "Alright, but apart from scurvy, rickets, osteomalacia, Reiter's syndrome, gout, ankylosing spondylitis, rheumatoid arthritis, psoriatic arthritis, septic arthritis, tuberculosis, osteitis, poliomyelitis and leprosy, what have the Romans ever done for us?" PFJ Member: "Brought peace?" Reg: "Oh, *peace*? SHUT UP!"

- vesemir

13h ago

Palaeolithic gnome is hardly the correct nomenclature for our distant ancestors, Guardian.

- BonzaBob

13h ago

Sadly the real problem is that there are far too many people on this earth for it to be sustainable. it is the sheer number of people that need to be fed, clothed, transported, housed, and kept warm that is causing the real global problems.

- ghstwrtr7BonzaBob

13h ago

Actually, that is not the problem. This earth has the capacity to support many more

people than it presently does. What the earth *can't* do, however, is give everyone and iPhone or some other consumerable, in which we simply do not need.

Funfact: For the first time in history the world is experiencing both an epidemic of obesity *and* famine.

Food for thought, eh?

• BonzaBobghstwrtr7
12h ago

I would love for you to be right, but in order to support these people, we are cutting down rainforests and changing weather patterns all of which are lead to unsustainability.

• LordKeithBonzaBob
12h ago

He is correct, in terms of the ability to sustain the numbers, there is plenty of space, and with efficient farming, the planet could sustain a much higher population. There issue is that much of the planet is not managed correctly, as you mention, rainforests being cut down being one example of this.

• meltyman
13h ago

Studies of skeletal remains in cemetery sites show that when the Romans introduced town life to Britain 2,000 years ago, they also introduced us to scurvy, rickets, osteomalacia, Reiter's syndrome, gout, ankylosing spondylitis, rheumatoid arthritis, psoriatic arthritis, septic arthritis, tuberculosis, osteitis, poliomyelitis and leprosy.

A ridiculously incoherent list: some of these ailments are transmissible, others genetic. Where's the link with urban living?

• terre08meltyman
7h ago

Maybe people with these kind of genetics didn't survive in the hunter and gatherer societies while they might survive in a farming society?

• norfolk1810 terre08
5h ago

But a farming society is not an urban one, and the article blames all these diseases on living in cities. Try getting a crop of barley off a cobbled street!

• Stephen Berquistmeltyman
3h ago

Various links- sedentism, sanitation, population clustering, etc. You're right though that it's a bit tossed-off. Some more explanation would be good.

- Happyhead16
13h ago

An interesting and thought provoking and thoroughly sensible article! I enjoyed reading it whilst sitting at my desk, eating crisps and sitting very still.

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/ Copyright 2014 Evernote Corporation. All rights reserved. */.en-markup-crop-options { top: 18px !important; left: 50% !important; margin-left: -100px !important; width: 200px !important; border: 2px rgba(255,255,255,.38) solid !important; border-radius: 4px !important; } .en-markup-crop-options div div:first-of-type { margin-left: 0px !important; }*

now fashionable – although that is an excellent start. We also need to adopt a proxy ancestral activity regime: bending, stretching, carrying and manual labour. A daily walk is essential, at least part of the way to school or work. And spend as little time sitting down as practical, particularly by breaking up desk-bound work with five minute breaks every hour.

We must also re-engage with nature. Time spent with pets, gardening or in parks and gardens is crucial not just for psychological uplift but for interaction with the microbiota that support a healthy immune system. The pioneering work of microbiologist Graham Rook (pdf) has shown how fundamental biophilia is to our immune system, especially for children's health.

Crime science

If the physiological aspects of our deep past are easy enough to recognise and adapt to modern life, the socio-psychological elements – such as the inherent violence of the hunter – are rather more complex. According to the Metropolitan police, there are at least 225 gangs in London, 58 of which account for two-thirds of the gang crime. An urban street gang is basically a paleolithic hunting group, with powerful bonding and adherence to a very particular territory.

Sport, however, can be a socially positive proxy for hunting, and therefore for gang culture. It helps support education, personal development, discipline, social inclusion and enhanced self-esteem in those who might otherwise be drawn to petty crime. One of the best successes is the Midnight Basketball movement, which began in the US in 1986 and has since spread to Australia. In London, the Kickz programme and Arsenal-in-the-Community team do similar work, aiming to improve social cohesion and reduce crime and drug abuse: the latter's project on the Elthorne Park estate saw a 66% drop in youth crime in just three years.

City planning for human evolution

Some wider concerns can be best addressed by town planning. To help people walk more, for example, cities can focus on pedestrianisation projects, car-free walkways, river walks, canal towpaths, widening and greening pavements, improving security, cycle lanes, speed limits and above all, air quality – our ancient lungs cannot cope with diesel particulates.

Regularly dubbed 'America's fattest city', Houstonites' dietary choices are only one element of its spiralling diabetes problem. Can anything be done to reverse this deadly – and very costly – disease in a city addicted to sugar and cars?

Parks, playing fields and sports facilities are vital, as are "low-fat buildings" and active work practices such as standing desks, cycle racks and showers. The design of offices should encourage walking, with a showpiece stairway rather than just doors to the lift. Good dietary practice at the office extends to the canteen menu and the contents of drinks machines.

The design of residential buildings in a high-density city should be limited to six stories, and have at least some outside space, ample windows and sunlight. Offices, streets, domestic buildings and the public realm all need to be greened, externally and internally. Houseplants,

window boxes and roof gardens all have a positive role to play; as do participatory urban green spaces such as allotments, community gardens and city farms, especially in inner-city neighbourhoods lacking a large central park.

Our paleolithic immune systems and psyches desperately need such support. The town may not be our natural habitat, but we can make it our optimal one.

Gustav Milne is an honorary senior lecturer at University College London's Institute of Archaeology. He presents Urban Wellbeing: How to Live a Paleolithically-Correct Life in a 21st Century City on 24 May at 12noon, as part of the week-long UCL Festival of Culture in London.

- fubar1
3h ago

Bloody immigrant farmers from the Early StoneAge EU destroyed their way of life vote out.

- 4h ago

It is a sobering thought that all these conditions are rare or non-existent in non-urban societies, such as the tribal communities in Kitava, Papua New Guinea.

Where the life expectancy is 20 years below people in Eastern societies. And what is with the discredited paleo genome crap? There undoubtedly have been genetic changes relating to disease and social pressures. Just look at the Jews and their success in modern conurbations like New York and London. Which might in part be due to their being denied from owning agricultural land in Western Europe and so adapted to the emerging urban lifestyle and thriving (at least when not being attacked by genocidal murderers).

- georgina45
5h ago

People from the past respected each other and had a sense of community, people are forced out of their homes because they are poor. We are heading into the past but I think our paleolithic ancestors were a bit more sensible and caring and intelligent.

- Bogdanichgeorgina45
3h ago

"I think our paleolithic ancestors were a bit more sensible and caring and intelligent."

Yes like their habit of murdering the Neanderthal men and breeding with their women. If that isn't "sensible, caring and intelligent" I don't know what is. This myth of the distant past as some idyllic place where humans peaceably coexisted

is just that a myth. All the archaeological evidence points the other way. The main problem is humans from day one have been irremediably violent. They still are.

• neosio

9h ago

What utter nonsense.

• Troy Morganneosio

7h ago

Why? It make a great deal of sense based on fact

• FrederikII Troy Morgan

7h ago

Not really, we are living much longer and healthier lives now. Therefore living in cities is good for us. And getting better, thanks to growing environmental awareness.

• fubar1

9h ago

Trouble is most of them were dead before they hit fifty

• Rezan

9h ago

Paleolithic way of living is still common in many parts of the world especially in Asia and South Africa. Although countries like India and China are racing ahead with modern technology and quest for materialistic life nevertheless majority of the communities living in rural areas live more naturally with farming, fishing, trekking and so on. In India that is a highly geographically as well as culturally divided country has its own advantages and disadvantages of climate affected areas. In South India people living along the sea coasts are far fortunate as they naturally breathe sea air often walking up to the beach almost daily to relax. It's the same thing in parts of Africa. Most unfortunately the quest for survival on this earth by a man made system of work, pay taxes, bills, house rent, mortgage and so on and then retire and die has become a frightening reality. Urban life in the West looks very attractive for the unwary immigrant from the countries of the 'third world'. The glittering shopping malls, the sleek cars, the fashionable apartments, stylish restaurants, fast food chains. The sensible ones pursue education and make something meaningful of their lives by helping out people less fortunate than them through guidance. But apart from this modern life of computers, cell phones and so on is all an illusion. There is ultimate depression and life ends with a big question in the heart of the dying person. All this for what? "I could have done without this". True, imagine swimming in the rivers, hunting, scaling mountains, living by the sea and so on would have been worth it. This is how exactly the Native American lived. As a

part of nature until he was urbanized forcefully through genocide and forced assimilation. he same could be said of the Aborigines of Australia, the Maoris of Australia and the inhabitants of the Amazon. It is truly sad that the life that was meant to be for man by God was stolen by man himself to suit his selfish greedy nature.

- jobi258
10h ago

An urban street gang is basically a paleolithic hunting group, with powerful bonding and adherence to a very particular territory.

Why is this limited to urban street gangs?

What about companies, churches, other social groupings, etc. I suspect there is a reason why the range in sizes of such entities is not randomly distributed.

- ScepticMikejobi258
6h ago

Teams sports and their supporters ?

- SN1789
10h ago

Gee. if only we could go back to paleolithic life expectancy rates and paleolithic infant mortality rates, then we would really be in touch with our true nature. Or....there is no one rigid meaning of true human nature because the defining feature of humans is their flexibility due to their incredibly high levels of cooperation and communication with each other, the development of technology and culture. What is good for human development is not some cartoon mimicry of what existed in the past. The premise of the entire paleo fad is foolish.

- Stephen BerquistSN1789
3h ago

yes yes yes, we all know that, no one more than archaeologists. the fact is that we still have biological tendencies that affect our mental, emotional, and physical health (all of which really can't be separated in any case). it seems to me that trying to understand them and work with them is not something to immediately dismiss. not that this column is ultimately saying much. it is really just "we should all exercise more and get outdoors as much as possible and we should design cities that help us do that."

- Sam Carter
10h ago

The problem is the same one that Palaeo diet advocates have. Harking back to our earlier stages of development as a species ignores the fact that a) we are no longer

Palaeolithic hunter gatherers and b) we are a very versatile and adaptable species.

Concerning Physiology, we know that the Palaeo diet is rubbish. Cutting out carbs makes it essentially a variation of a medical diet called the Ketogenic diet. This diet is well studied due to its usage for epileptic children. We also know another form of it which caused huge problems. It was called the "Aitkens diet". Not only that, Gustav Milne ignores the fact our bodies have changed since the Palaeolithic. We have evidence of shifts in our microbiomes, which indicate we are no longer Palaeolithic hunters.

Just looking at this section alone it is clear that the argument is too simplistic and doesn't acknowledge our development as a species. Whilst eating healthily, doing exercise, providing community support for young adults and better town planning is certainly useful, it is foolish to assume that this viewpoint will be able to deal with the problems in their entirety.

- Stephen Berquist Sam Carter
3h ago

Please read the actual column, not the one that you want to argue against. He's not advocating for the paleo diet. He actually states right out that it's nonsense while noting that we should also eat mostly unprocessed foods, no added refined sugar, and lots of veggies.

- jmad357
10h ago

In the paleo life style physical injury could mean death. People then mostly lived to the ripe old age of 35 to 40. Parasites internal and external were a constant in that era. Infant mortality was very high. Predation by large carnivores was a constant threat. Food insecurity was frequently present. In other words, I enjoy my modern rural life.

- Brian Milne
11h ago

'when the Romans introduced town life to Britain 2,000 years ago' Did they? There is a group of Bronze Age dwellings discovered during an excavation at Must Farm quarry in the East Anglian fens. Given population density estimates for the late prehistoric period, it represents an urban setting. The settlement, dating toward the end of the Bronze Age (1200-800 BC), is contemporary with ancient loch side dwellings known as crannogs in Scotland and Ireland, stilt houses, also known as pile dwellings, around the Alpine lakes and the terps of Friesland, manmade hill dwellings in the Netherlands. All are in clusters giving a clear indication of settled dwellings with 'high' populations in terms of demographic calculations for overall numbers of people in those areas. Living collectively and cooperatively means shared labour, defence and also to a point reduces inbreeding which does long term damage. It looks like instinct, intuition or

whatever we might like to call it, herded us together thus giving rise to larger towns and cities which actually sprang up in the then very fertile Mesopotamia and Indus Valley. The Romans were latecomers.

- ElyFrog
11h ago

Paleolithic pathetic, I'd say. Good ideas on a walkable city, nature orientation, physical work, shortening buildings. But nothing new here that 'new urbanism' didn't think of years ago. The dumbass paleolithic diet was for people who had to eat what was right next to them. It was socially determined, not genetically.

There are no violent gangs when there is no poverty. Mr. Professor doesn't mention that. Poverty, capitalist crowding, corporate control of cities, landlords, car transport concentrations - missed too. Sad stuff here.

- Nakor
11h ago

The idea that there was one "paleolithic lifestyle", or for that matter one "paleolithic genome" is absurd.

Humans are adaptive, opportunistic creatures, who managed to figure out how to live everywhere from temperate grasslands and frozen tundras to deserts, dense jungles, and tiny atolls in the Pacific ocean. The lifestyles found in each would be quite different from one another.

- ScepticMike Nakor
10h ago

Indeed the classic is to compare Kalahari Bushman to Inuit.

- NakorScepticMike
8h ago

Yep, and even those two peoples share important features like high levels of seasonal variation in food supplies and overall rather "marginal" environments.

- fourth5
11h ago

When a society is breaking down cities become high pressure points because they need so much servicing.

I believe that UK impoverishment is bound to continue and live in the country with wood stove, vegetable plot, orchard and friendly neighbours

- hirpling
12h ago

If you fall ill and want to claim sickness or disability benefits, one of the questions you are asked is whether you own a pet. A "yes" is treated as de facto proof that you cannot be too ill to work.

• mitchellkiwi

12h ago

The arrival of farming, hence semi-sedentary rather than nomadic, coincided with and certainly sustained a massive increase in population. In many respects, it could be claimed that hunter gatherer populations had reached their upper limit, that flora and fauna simply being found and exploited could no longer support their numbers. Nevertheless, I do agree for children it is extremely valuable being able to make territories, friends and adventures in a fairly wild natural environment, paddling in rivers or lakes, building rafts to sail on, getting to know local farmers cattle, sheep, and horses, feeding chickens and collecting eggs, etc. etc. this was my childhood and the childhood of my daughters, now young women, who remember that as idyllic and certainly wish it for their own children. I am not sure video games are any improvement or advancement on that contact with nature.

• hardatwork mitchellkiwi

11h ago

try telling a farmer that farming is 'semi-sedentary'

• cherrywood

12h ago

Just fabulous insight here. But you forgot to mention that cave persons put butter in their coffee. Really Guardian?

• norfolk1810 cherrywood

5h ago

Since The earliest credible evidence of coffee-drinking appears in the middle of the 15th century, who were these cave persons?

• raggedbandman

12h ago

Somebody needs to step outside their field of study and take the blinkers off. Assuming that cultural evolution was some sort of mistake and wasn't a conscious evolution based on actual benefits to human existence is a ridiculous proposition.

All over the world paleolithic man evolved from families to tribes to clans, trade and intermarriage between groups solidified relationships for mutual benefit and we made some very admirable decisions all along the way. Does anyone really want to live like the tribes in Kitava, Papua New Guinea?

• ID0120137raggedbandman

11h ago

I wonder. I suspect that farming cultures were able to outcompete hunter gatherers if nothing else than because of their larger population, with obvious consequences if conflict arose. They may well also have had more complex societies (more hierarchical). It doesn't necessarily follow however they were any happier. Similarly with the move to city dwelling. Whether life was any better in cities probably depended on where you were in the pecking order.

• LinearBandKeramikraggedbandman

9h ago

Assuming that cultural evolution was some sort of mistake and wasn't a conscious evolution based on actual benefits to human existence is a ridiculous proposition.

Except for the fact that it is essentially true.

• Stephen Berquistraggedbandman

3h ago

Who are you? Archaeologists were saying that 50 years ago, and then someone had the bright idea that a bunch of people didn't go out and say "hey guys, let's go invent agriculture!!" Or "hey, let's move on from the bronze age to the iron age!" guess what? people have very little idea of where society is moving, even today. cities rise and fall, states collapse, knowledge is lost. there is no such thing as "cultural evolution". stuff happens and that causes other stuff to happen. which is actually pretty much the theory of actual evolution too (and yes, i have to know biological anthropology too, so i've got a pretty clear idea of it that i would be happy to explain in a more serious way). archaeologists spend yeeeeaaaaars of their lives evaluating these propositions. we have this covered. really. we do.

• lentoon

12h ago

An urban street gang is basically a paleolithic hunting group, with powerful bonding and adherence to a very particular territory

This is an odd conception of a palaeolithic hunting group - has the author asked any of his UCL colleagues about this?

• Stephen Berquistlento

3h ago

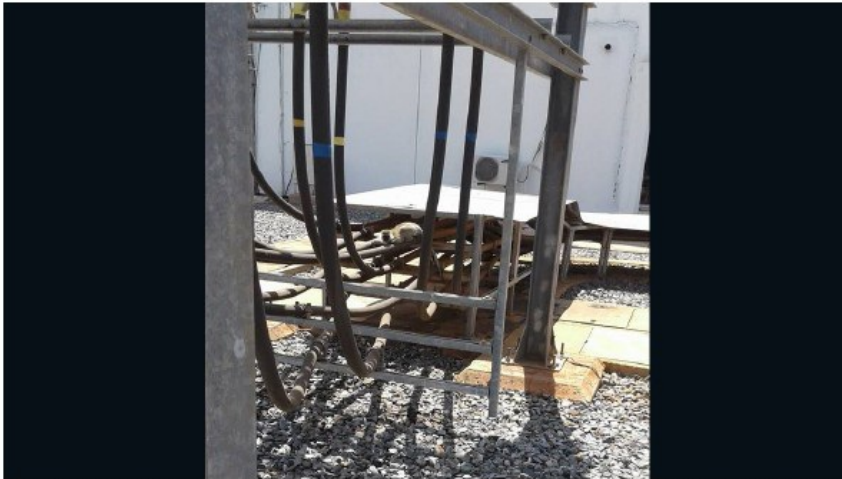
I hear that there's not a lot of movement between the anthropology wing and the archaeology wing. probably not to anyone's benefit.

Monkey causes nationwide blackout in Kenya

By Tiffany Ap and Lonzo Cook, CNN Updated 12:27 AM ET, Wed June 8, 2016
2016-06-08T04:21:26Z

cnn.com

<http://www.cnn.com/2016/06/08/africa/kenya-monkey-power-outage-trnd/index.html>



KenGen posted a photograph of what appears to be a vervet monkey crouching on top of electrical equipment.

(CNN)Talk about monkey business.

Kenya -- yes, the entire country -- was left without power Tuesday after a rogue monkey got into a power station and triggered a nationwide blackout.

The primate fell onto a transformer at the Gitaru hydroelectric power station, according to KenGen, which owns the facility.

The company is the country's

largest generator of electricity, providing around 80% of energy consumed in the east African nation.

In a statement posted to the company's Facebook page, the company said the system had been restored and that all power generating units were operating normally.

As for the offending monkey? It survived the incident, KenGen said, and has been handed over to the Kenyan Wildlife Service.

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Moose running loose at Utah Capitol

June 3, 2016

yahoo.com

<https://www.yahoo.com/news/moose-running-loose-utah-capitol-222233083.html?nhp=1>

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — A moose that darted across the lawn of Utah's State Capitol and evaded wildlife officers for hours will be relocated to a canyon about 60 miles south of Salt Lake City.

Mike Roach with Utah's Division of Wildlife Resources said the young female moose emerged from a canyon Friday and ended up in a city park north of downtown Salt Lake City.

The animal was spooked by passers-by and climbed a nearby hill to the grounds of the Capitol. She ran across lawns before dipping down into the park, returning again to the statehouse and running down nearby roads to escape officers.

Roach said "she just would not hold still."

Officers tranquilized the roughly 700-pound animal and joggers and bystanders helped carry it on a tarp to a waiting trailer.

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The strange history of opiates in America: from morphine for kids to heroin for soldiers | James Nevius

theguardian.com

James Nevius

They went from common painkillers to blacklisted substances, and now they're standard again. Along the way, efforts to criminalize haven't stemmed usage



Opium and cocaine used to be easily found in common pain relievers, making it easy to be quietly addicted.
Photograph: The New York Historical Society/Getty Images Photograph: Corbis

@jamesnevius

Tuesday 15 March 2016 06.30 EDT Last modified on Friday 3 June 2016 14.51 EDT

America's burgeoning opiate problem is a tragedy, but it shouldn't come as a surprise: it stretches back to the arrival of the Mayflower in 1620.

Among the Pilgrims was physician Samuel Fuller, and in his kit bag he likely carried an early form of laudanum, the opium/alcohol tincture first created by famed chemist Paracelsus.

Like other opiates, laudanum is derived from the opium poppy (the "joy plant" as the Sumerians called it 5,000 years ago). Like all opiates, it was an effective pain killer, an anti-diarrheal and a soporific. In the rough frontier of early America, opiates helped ease the pain brought on by such ailments as smallpox, cholera and dysentery.

By the American Revolution, opium was a common medical tool. Thomas Jefferson, though generally skeptical of the medical treatments of his day, turned to laudanum in his later years to help ease his chronic diarrhea – an affliction that probably helped kill him.

He felt so much better on the drug that he wrote to a friend, "with care and laudanum I may consider myself in what is to be my habitual state." Jefferson's use of the word "habitual" is telling. He ultimately grew his own poppies on his Monticello estate.

By the middle of the 19th century, recreational opiate use was becoming more common. The scaremongering press condemned Chinese opium dens, playing up the drug's immigrant associations and planting the idea that Chinese men were using opium to lure white women into having sex.

Most Americans didn't need an opium den to get their fix, though. By then, opiates were the main ingredient in everything from teething powders to analgesics for menstrual cramps. Patent medicines – so-called because they often contained secret "patented" ingredients – flooded the market. Some served a useful purpose, but they also became easy methods to get high.

One famous product was Mrs Winslow's Soothing Syrup, a morphine and alcohol concoction

they knew what effect this would have on people and profits. Also a clueless GP layer giving them out for small injuries.

Tying it all back to the Mayflower is pointless and avoids the issues.

• Aseoria BurgermaS

15 Mar 2016 18:26

"...clueless GPs" in the US are now being blamed for overprescribing opiates, when twenty years ago, we were admonished to treat pain as "the fifth vital sign", and ratchet up treatment with narcotics as much as necessary, in order to provide the patient a "pain-free life". This outrage was stuffed down our throats by local and state medical associations and their associated star chambers, the pharmaceutical companies that run the government, and the various governmental agencies that do the bidding of the corporations. Now, we are being blamed for what the "pain specialists" were demanding that we do--prescribe narcotics for acute and chronic pain, especially long-acting narcotics, which are more expensive, and more easily abused. I remember how blown away I was when I got records for adolescents seen in the ER for a stubbed toe, who got Vicodin. Now, many people are addicted or habituated to using chronic narcotics, and we are being pressed to withdraw their use for everyone. A young female "pain specialist" told the audience at a recent family practice conference I attended that patients "should understand that pain is a part of life", and that she does not prescribe ANY opioids in her practice.

I am astounded that Purdue is still flogging its new 80+ mg hydcodone, without acetaminophen, and Oxycontin in massive dosages.

Please, lay the blame for the opioid epidemic where it belongs--on the government, the pharmaceutical companies, and the so-called "pain specialists", who recommend Fentanyl patches and long-acting opiates, or now, after the patients are addicted, nothing at all, or yoga, physical therapy, cognitive behavioral therapy, and acupuncture, none of which are covered by most insurances. All we need is more unfunded mandates, which will surely lead to increased numbers of heroin addicts and suicides.

It's enough to make me quit all together. But I don't have the money, and won't, the way Social Security is being flushed down the endless war machine.

• RichardHurtz BurgermaS

15 Mar 2016 20:59

do not forget Afganastan, we got opium production up from 10% to 100% in just 5 yrs time . .USA USA . . wee

• Katime Aseoria

16 Mar 2016 14:21

Opiate Pain meds prescribed for pain can be safely tapered off. Opiate meds don't make you high when in pain, the pain absorbs their effects.

The other side of what sociologists call the "social panic" regarding pain medication: there are not only many doctors who now in the US refuse to prescribe any opiate med but also many patients, particularly elderly ones, who refuse to take them. An example, I came across an elderly woman (I'm elderly myself and attend a senior health clinic) who has surgeries for lung cancer and lost half a lung plus had chemo etc. She is in constant pain but refuses any opiate medication because they are "bad". She and folks like her are thinking of committing suicide because of pain and inability to be mobile in any way.

Brace yourself: the next social panic will be about so many people in pain who are refusing pain meds. Their rate of suicide might top the present rate of death by overdose.

- Matt Perry

15 Mar 2016 6:54

Our medicine cabinet is full of unused oxycodone pills. Last summer one of my sons had hernia surgery - prescription for oxy filled but barely used. Two weeks ago a son had wisdom teeth cut out - more oxy prescribed but barely used. Etc. etc. Whatever the medical issue, we seem to get these prescriptions. In my personal experience, they are tremendously over-prescribed.

- namjodhMatt Perry

15 Mar 2016 7:02

If I ever get invited to your house, first thing I'm going to do is ask to use the bathroom.

- LordMurphy Matt Perry

15 Mar 2016 7:22

My GP is cut from a more just grin and bear it kind of cloth in respect of pain relief, as are I suspect quite a lot of other GP's who don't seem to be dishing out pain killers like sweets if the grumbles of my fellow old codger associates are to be believed. The same is true of sleeping pills, just count sheep or buy a lavender pillow is the standard prescription these days.

- Marcedward Matt Perry

15 Mar 2016 8:36

You can make decent money on those pills on the street, waste not want not.

- bravo7490

15 Mar 2016 7:20

Why governments keep trying to tell us what we can put in in our own bodies, or take out (abortion) is beyond me. They have so many other things that need to be taken care and they're doing a piss poor job of it. Waste of time and money.

- lostinbago

15 Mar 2016 8:38

I can't speak to dependence, but I went through 3 years of decline when my liver failed and used both oxycodone and hydrocodone for pain frequently while awaiting a transplant. I continued use for a couple of months in recovery but when I got better, I never used it again. For me at least, there was no withdrawal or craving. I think I still have some left in a box somewhere, but haven't used it. I wonder if some of the calvinist thinking is what drives much of the anti-drug movement. Puritanical types think pain is part of god's punishment for our 'sins' and we need to have it to accept god's laws and join the experience of pain for our original sin.

- leuan lostinbago

15 Mar 2016 13:19

I was prescribed morphine in Denmark (for pain relief). It was in a little container which I carried attached to me and injected a dose automatically every couple of hours or so. I also had an 'override' button which I could use to give myself another dose. I had to go into hospital every couple of days or so to get it refilled, and they could also take a print out of how many doses had been given. (I was told that if I used the override button too often the whole machine would be taken away).

I was a little concerned about 'addiction', but was told that 'you might feel like you've got the flu for a day or two when you stop, but it's nothing to worry about'. Like you, in fact I had no withdrawal or craving.

- DISGUYROX

15 Mar 2016 9:10

As a veteran, I go to America's premier drug pushers, the VA. As of May 1, I will be C&S for 33 unbroken years. 6 weeks ago, I had a complete knee replacement. Fortunately, the VA paid for this by a REAL doctor and not one of their machete wielders. I spent only two days in the hospital after surgery. They asked me if I wanted anything for pain and I refused. Not only am I tolerant of pain(I've been married.lol), I prefer to not take any pain meds which are the typical ones in this story. Back when I quit using drugs and/or smoking, I quit cold turkey. Then I went to warm chicken;~) Of all the drugs I've ever done, the absolute worst and most damaging was alcohol, the "legal" one.

Finally, when watching the network news in the evening, every commercial on every network is drugs, drugs & more drugs. No wonder America(and much of the "free" world) is so screwed up.

- wadenelson

15 Mar 2016 9:18

Interviewing an MD who specializes in managing chronic pain could vastly improve an article like this. Talk about patients who cannot function, cannot get out of bed without pain-killers because of serious back injuries, for instance. Talk about the downward spiral as dosages increase. Talk about patients who can and cannot manage the resulting addiction. Talk about the screening, the endless hoops both patients and MD's must jump through to satisfy DEA and state boards that they're not just pushers. No, it's too easy just to claim "And MD's hand them out like candy!"

- FarradayBrewster wadenelson

15 Mar 2016 10:20

Did you read the full article? It's a broad overview of 400 years of opiate use in the USA, not a focus on what current MDs are doing. And had you bothered to follow the links, you would have seen pieces by physicians and policy experts supporting the over prescription of pain pills.

- Tanya Stone

15 Mar 2016 11:15

Interesting and informative. Thank you. You state that drinking alcohol became more popular than ever after Prohibition was repealed; but do recall that drinking alcohol (ale, beer, wine, etc.) became ubiquitous in the West for thousands of years because drinking the water could kill you.

- majamer

15 Mar 2016 11:19

Every nation has the seeds of self-destruction. It's the collective death-drive instinct. The same instinct that compelled America to engage in risky and aggressive acts to outgrow other nations and bully them, has triggered the path to her own destruction. This innate desire to die has been quixotically fueling the madness and feeling of supremacy we see around us. No wonder why all politicians are pushing for healthcare laws to end health insurance discrimination for mental health services because they know that fighting addiction is going to be the toughest of the government's challenges especially when it spreads through the military personnel!

- James Lester Montgomerie

15 Mar 2016 11:26

lol I wonder what T. Jeff's street name was.

- Pazuzu James Lester Montgomerie

15 Mar 2016 21:50

Hemings.

- Loriann Witte

15 Mar 2016 12:31

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- Barclay Reynolds

15 Mar 2016 12:48

Can't look at history, back then, no antibiotics for teeth, infections, so pain had to be relieved. Now it started in late 1980's by Perdue, they pushed OxyContin for minor pain, gave away trips, money to hospitals, doctors to give out. They new one just approved, they claim one can't abuse it's, VERY FUNNY, YOU ALWAYS TAKE MORE THEN ONE.

- nion123 Barclay Reynolds

15 Mar 2016 14:50

That's because the abuse happens when people crush them into powder to snort or mainline (the new one doesn't crush into powder). Abusers don't get the high by taking more than one, only severe constipation.

- Pazuzu nion123

15 Mar 2016 21:54

No, sorry: of course 20mg of oxy is twice as strong as 10mg of oxy, and it can be abused orally. If it's a time-release pill, you just chew it. Unless, of course, it's one of the new-style pills which can't be broken into powder; they've found a way of coating each individual grain in the pill with the time-release coating (the pills have a gummy texture). Still, I believe that it's still possible to overdose on the new TR pills if you take too many at the same time, since the oxy is being released into your system at the same rate.

- felicidades

15 Mar 2016 12:58

It was also said by the Argentinians that during the war in the malvinas, that British soldiers were off their heads on something while listening to their walkman.

- Mariano Torrespico felicidades

16 Mar 2016 4:57

0 1

Nonsense! Lies told by the losing side.

Reply |

Report

- alastriona

15 Mar 2016 13:15

Also a key is to keep patients from doctor shopping and for doctors to recognize

patients who are in pain but also at risk for addiction. I used to work medical records in a four doctor office. There were three patients who called in EVERY Friday for Vicodin refills. I knew they were call in and pull their charts ahead of time. At least one of them became seriously addicted. The nurse manager had to develop a system to track patients who were getting multiple opioid prescriptions from doctors in the larger medical group.

• ID7510578 alastriona
16 Mar 2016 14:32

I always think wouldn't it be grand if government could afford to hire some of the silicon valley tech geniuses to do things like create a pharmacy registry so pharmacists could let doctors know their patient was getting drugs for 4 different doctors.

• ytrewq ID7510578
16 Mar 2016 18:34

Already done around here. Doctor shopping is ancient history. Computers. Got to have a dealer these days. They have killed off most of the legitimate pain doctors by harassing them and putting their names in the newspapers as bad guys. Don't hurt yourself and become a new pain patient whatever you do. "Take two aspirin and don't call back because my medical license is at risk, but have a nice day" You need serious pain relief? Better have money to pay for it on the street. Ridiculous politics and religion at work to pretend they are solving the problem they don't have.

• ytram
15 Mar 2016 15:13

As a 100% disabled veteran with chronic PTSD and terribly severe cluster migraines that the VA just barely treats because they have stopped prescribing any good pain killers. So two million veterans cannot get relief, because about 20,000 ignorant vets got addicted.

How shitty is that.? 2,000,000 vets suffer so that the VA can be safe from doctors unable to control their patients and take them off their drugs.
That is OVER REACTING to a situation.

• ytrewqytram
16 Mar 2016 18:21

Absolutely. Politicians don't care about you, just suffer and STFU. I live in a state with the most OD's in the US and about as severe penalties for patients and doctors as you can find. Despite this nazi-like law enforcement OD deaths have not decreased. Could it be because I'm 40 miles from Juarez ya'think?

• blacksox666

15 Mar 2016 17:57

Grandmother told me they used to put some poppyseed in a handkerchief, tie it up, boil it a little and give it to babies to suck. Quieted them down for sure.

• voxusa

15 Mar 2016 19:53

Funny, no mention of the Opium War... perpetrated by England to make sure opium could be sold to the Chinese. An interesting omission in your "history"...

• sieteocho voxusa

15 Mar 2016 21:11

Yeah, why not try reading the title of this article more closely in the future.

• imagine voxusa

16 Mar 2016 9:33

Yes. That is odd. All those Chinese people imported into America somehow didn't count and just get a brief mention and associated with deviancy. The only ethnic group in the history of the United States to have been specifically denied entrance into the country continues to be invisible to historians.

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that was marketed to parents of fussy children as a “perfectly harmless and pleasant” way to produce a “natural quiet sleep, by relieving the child from pain”. After the civil war, even more potent drugs entered the market, including the opiate heroin (introduced by Bayer around the same time as aspirin) and the stimulant cocaine, which was used in everything from cough syrups to Coca-Cola (despite the company’s stringent denials).

Opium imports hit their peak in the 1890s, right around the rise of the temperance movement, perhaps because of the demonization of alcohol, or perhaps because opiate use was easier to hide.

This was the status quo until 1906, when the federal government under Teddy Roosevelt stepped in with its landmark Pure Food and Drug Act, which required any “dangerous” or “addictive” drugs to appear on the label of products. Three years later, the Smoking Opium Exclusion Act – America’s first stab at drug prohibition – banned the importation of opiates that were to be used purely for recreational use, though it’s unclear if this was really a measure to curb drug use or simply anti-Chinese legislation.

The next big drug law came in 1914, when the Harrison Narcotics Tax Act both created a federal registry of “every person who produces, imports, manufactures, compounds, deals in, dispenses, distributes, or gives away opium or coca leaves or any compound, manufacture, salt, derivative, or preparation thereof”, and levied taxes on them.

While physicians were supposedly excluded if the drugs were deemed medically necessary, the law severely limited the ability of doctors to prescribe opiates. The act singled out addiction as a moral failing, not a medical disease, which made it nearly impossible for physicians to treat anyone with an opiate dependence.



Photograph: Corbis

Drugs became a matter of law enforcement, not public health. That still holds a century later. Attempts by doctors to change the public conversation made little headway, and those who continued to prescribe opiates to addicts as part of treatment programs were jailed. Drug use further spiked when alcohol was banned by the passage of the 18th amendment in 1919.

When prohibition was overturned by the 21st amendment in 1933, the cocktail culture that had been created in speakeasies across the nation made drinking more socially acceptable than it ever had been. As heroin had been banned in the interim, this only further served to stigmatize recreational opiate users, who were marginalized as junkies.

After the second world war, opioids – synthetic opiates – began to enter the market in greater numbers, including drugs formulated using Hydrocodone (later popularized in the 1970s as the narcotic in Vicodin) and Oxycodone (the opiate best known today as an ingredient in Oxycontin). Many doctors – knowing the risks of addiction and dependence – embraced a sort of “opiophobia”, which caused them to shy away from prescribing pain pills frequently.

The increase in recreational drug use in the 1960s – including a spike in heroin use by soldiers in Vietnam – gave rise to both the Controlled Substances Act in 1970 and the Drug Enforcement Agency in 1973, both of which were designed to limit access to opiates. However, as doctors became increasingly convinced that they were under-treating pain – and new opioids entered the market – prescriptions for painkillers took off.

It's no coincidence that this move was heavily endorsed by pharmaceutical companies, which had helped fund the studies that showed that doctors were under-prescribing pain medications. Meanwhile, pharmaceutical reps aggressively lobbied physicians on the value of their pills, and as Dr Celine Gounder noted in the New Yorker: "By 2010, the United States, with about five per cent of the world's population, was consuming ninety-nine per cent of the world's hydrocodone".

Today, there are medical answers to opiate addiction, but until America stops stigmatizing drug users as degenerates, those answers aren't doing much good. Regulatory hurdles prevent many physicians from being able to prescribe buprenorphine, a medicine shown to effectively treat opioid dependence.

And the DEA has done little to stem heroin in the United States. Since heroin is cheaper than prescription opiates, it is all too easy to switch from a legal prescription to illegal street drugs. On 10 March, the Senate passed a major drug treatment and prevention bill; the question remains whether it will make it into law and, if so, if it will do any good.

Tomorrow, 44 more Americans will die from prescription painkillers, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. And if history is any indication, attempting to legislate an illness away will do little other than force addicts to search for yet another way to find their fix.

comments

- BasementWax
15 Mar 2016 4:11

Hampshire, England in the 19C used to produce opium. Papaver somniferum grows really well in Britain. Not as well as in Afghanistan but well enough to produce raw opium.

- karenthinks BasementWax
15 Mar 2016 5:42

The main obstacle to home laudanum production in the UK is access to high enough proof alcohol. You can get a mild tincture by infusing the resinous poppy sap in whisky or vodka, but to get a higher concentration you need a stronger alcohol to act as a solvent.

- rightwinggit karenthinks
15 Mar 2016 6:27

I'm not in any way condoning illegal drugs but you can get double proof vodka (80% alcohol) which can be used for, say, making homemade limoncello - I find commercial limoncello too sweet. Ideally you should use 97% spirit that can be found on sale in supermarkets in Italy but I've not been able to find it in the UK.

• RedPanda rightwinggit
15 Mar 2016 18:40

I've bought 151-proof rum for an ex-navy friend. Only bottle of booze I've ever seen with a big label warning of its flammability.

• BasementWax
15 Mar 2016 4:17

I love the hit of morphine off a nurse when I'm sick in hospital. It is so nice, a little jab in the back of the hand off a nurse of grandmotherly age and you are off into the arms of Morpheus.

It is bliss.

A few proper withdrawals convinced me of the need to control the amount of self administered pain relief. Little and not too often.

Do that and playing with opiates is a doddle.

• Pazuzu BasementWax
15 Mar 2016 21:30

We know that you've been contacted by a certain individual, a man who calls himself... Morpheus. Now whatever you think you know about this man is irrelevant. He is considered by many authorities to be the most dangerous man alive.

• BasementWax Pazuzu
16 Mar 2016 4:08

They want to try the crack. Now that is very very addictive. And just as unaffordable.

• JezzasBaconButtie
15 Mar 2016 4:21

There was a brilliant documentary on one of the satellite channels a couple of months ago, that detailed how the Wehrmacht were off their nuts on Crystal Meth for most of the war (which explains a lot). It was developed as a 'pick-me-up' in Germany in the 30s and sold over the counter. We found it in a downed Luftwaffe pilot's survival pack and back engineered it to ascertain its purpose. After that, we issued amphetamines to the 8th Army in North Africa. They were tested on an armoured brigade, which promptly

attacked and routed a German/Italian position and kept going for three days

- mikedow JezzasBaconButtie
15 Mar 2016 5:36

The product was named Pervitin.

- mazeltov JezzasBaconButtie
15 Mar 2016 10:42

The role of intoxicants in war is much under-explored. A friend who met and interviewed many ex-SS officers, all guilty of horrible atrocities, told me that they all confessed to having been stinking drunk when they committed their crimes.

- leuan mazeltov
15 Mar 2016 13:10

'Speed' (amphetamines) was widely used in the UK forces during WW2. There's a lovely scene in 'The Cruel Sea' where Jack Hawkins (as the commander of a corvette on convoy escort duty) asks the doctor for 'something to keep him awake' while he hunts a U-boat.

It was also issued to RAF pilots and land forces to be used as a stimulant when circumstances demanded. The museum of the paras at Arnhem has a big display of the drugs used by the paratroops who took part in Market Garden. They must have been completely off their heads.

All servicemen were issued morphine for use if wounded. I have heard (tho' don't know how true it was) that RAF bomber crew members who raided the aircraft's supplies were occasionally given (very) rough justice by being ejected from the aircraft at height. The ex-servicemen I knew in the 1960s who used morphine had all started in the forces - either when wounded, or just by raiding their (and other's) standard issues.

World war two was definitely an amphetamine and alcohol fuelled war (on all sides).

- BasementWax
15 Mar 2016 4:21

Well done The writer for mentioning Buprenorphine. All too often in this newspaper I have read of the benefits of methadone as a tool for getting addicts weaned off gear. Well, most meth users use gear on top, at least two a week die and very few come off opiates for a long time. The buprenorphine acts as a blocker so gear users waste their money.

No one overdoses on Buprenorphine unlike on the meth.

I only hope the Guardian maintains a view of Meth as relatively bad and Buprenorphine as relatively good.

• pollystyrene BasementWax
15 Mar 2016 4:52

The buprenorphine acts as a blocker so gear users waste their money.

So why would they use it?

There is no point in trying to treat people who don't want to stop using drugs for drug addiction.

• Grenners BasementWax
15 Mar 2016 5:43

It's true that Buprenorphine acts as a blocker but a lot of IV drug users still use it to supplement their drug use. As the buprenorphine metabolises the receptors unblock and open up to other opioids. The majority of IV drug users know this.

It's also a drug of abuse since it can be both snorted and/ or injected so it's not necessarily a universal panacea.

• Elyasm BasementWax
15 Mar 2016 9:31

For the sake of clarity alone, I would recommend spelling out methadone rather than referring to it as Meth, which (in US at least) is the common street name for methamphetamine.

• Existangst
15 Mar 2016 4:57

It should be nobody else's business what I put inside my body.

• BigBananaExistangst
15 Mar 2016 5:36

This comment was removed by a moderator because it didn't abide by our community standards. Replies may also be deleted. For more detail see our FAQs

• stumpedup_32 Existangst
15 Mar 2016 6:49

Sign here to relinquish use of the NHS in the event of taking some moody drugs then.

• swfoutsida Existangst

15 Mar 2016 11:30

It's not.

But it's our business what is legal.

- pollystyrene

15 Mar 2016 4:57

I'm a bit confused by this piece.

First of all opiates are quite legally used as painkillers for all ages. Maybe not for teething, but a child could be given diamorphine as a painkiller.

The problem in the USA seems to be that the affluent have little problem obtaining prescription opiates, whereas that really isn't how it works under the NHS. Better control of prescription opiates to prevent addiction developing would seem to be the starting point.

I agree that once someone is addicted, there's not much point trying to deal with that via the law.

- Fred Bloggs pollystyrene

15 Mar 2016 5:45

The article merely charts America's confused love affair with opiates, from the days when they were in everything, to rejection to some kind of reconciliation (whilst remaining in denial). In passing it refers to the drugs acceptability for use by WASPS and the rich.

- alex13 pollystyrene

15 Mar 2016 6:17

I go through withdrawal from prescription painkillers every few months, I can't take anti inflammatory drugs so am left with opiate type ones. As through use the body gets used to them I have to stop one and switch to another every 3-6 months and its hard work for a couple of wks. The worst part is waking up in the night having odd spasms, once woke myself up punching myself in the eye that was a shock. There are fever like symptoms and off Tramadol I go through sleeplessness and depression. However I can exist using them and over all I have some quality of life that on no meds or over the counter pain killers I would just be in too much pain all the time so would be able to do nothing. Why anyone would go through this for pleasure I don't know, though when I first was prescribed some they did make me feel quite euphoric.

- 15 Mar 2016 21:34

When I was a kid, in the early 70s, living in Honduras with my mother, it wasn't

unusual for physicians to prescribe a tincture of opium for diarrhoea, since opiates cause constipation.

- casparw

15 Mar 2016 5:30

a spike in heroin use

- dave56

15 Mar 2016 5:31

America had a far higher number of opiate addicts than Britain in the twentieth century up to the end of the sixties when we joined them in the war on drugs. Our 'special relationship' with America is a protection racket when we said no to joining them in Vietnam they refused to help in Northern Ireland, though that may have made things worse. We have to support their foreign policy and I suspect they dictate our internal policies. We have a hundred times as many addicts now compared to the sixties. The British System of treatment was not perfect but now we have the drug gangs. So thank you America as we adopt their standards for mental health care where the new addicts are treated alongside the mentally ill often 'turning them on' to drugs to get their hands on their benefit payments. 'Well done you are in the support group' says the addict to the schizophrenic 'want to buy some drugs?'

- Pazuzu dave56

15 Mar 2016 21:37

Funny how it's all the US's fault, not the result of a wide array of complex causes and effects. Handy, if anything.

- dave56 Pazuzu

15 Mar 2016 23:52

I forgot the USA are God's nation and therefore can in no way be morally culpable. It does happen to be their fault because they were the ones who treated drug addiction as a crime where we treated it as an illness. Two of my friends took their own lives rather than return to prison in the seventies, because of the drug laws so cheers for that you self righteous ignorant twerp.

- Pazuzu dave56

16 Mar 2016 3:12

I'm sorry to hear about your friends, but engaging in the kind of reductive, monocausal argumentation on display in your post is hardly the way to honor their memory. And where exactly do I posit the US as God's morally unassailable nation?

- leuan

15 Mar 2016 5:46

Yes, diamorphine (heroin) and morphine can be the most unpleasant of drugs. Though a addict (and not all users are addicts) is fine as long as the supply is there. Back when morphine was legal (pre-1967) there were any number of addicts in our town (mainly ex-servicemen who had become addicted while on active service). They were 'fine upstanding members of the community' (a couple of doctors, teachers and councillors) who suddenly had to resign their positions when their supply dried up when it was prohibited.

But opium? I've been in a few communities (Iran and India) where an opium pipe is passed around the dinner table after a good meal in the same way that a brandy (as dangerous a drug) is poured here. A most civilised way to end a meal and pass some time, IMHO.

Unrefined - 'natural' as nature produces them - drugs can play a productive part in our societies. It's when they're refined (as powders) that they can - and do - create havoc.

• LordMurphyleuan
15 Mar 2016 6:37

I am in agreement with you. Fortunately in certain societies that do not unduly over trouble themselves with issues such as moral weakness, old people that wish to indulge in recreational opium smoking are considered to have earned the right to do so. All that the moral weakness argument has succeeded in doing is to make a managed and manageable problem become a criminal justice disaster with the added bonus of helping to create a global criminal empire which now props up the banking industry.

• Pazuzu leuan
15 Mar 2016 21:41

Same with coca leaves as opposed to refined cocaine. In the Andes, coca tea is a must to help combat altitude sickness, and the indigenous people who've had leaf chewing as part of their culture for centuries show no ill effects from lifetime use. I largely agree with you on opium, though of course it is highly physically addictive in a way that coca just isn't, so it's hard to make a comparison. Let's not forget the Opium Wars, in which the opium imported by the UK to China from India caused such an epidemic of addiction that the Chinese government banned it, leading to the UK going to war against China for the right to push its opium to Chinese addicts. Imagine if Colombia went to war with another country to keep the cocaine flowing!

• 15 Mar 2016 5:59

Bullshit premise in the article really. America's burgeoning opiate use is the product of two things:

- 1) economic collapse of the union leading to mass unemployment and poverty
- 2) Pharmaceutical companies knowingly producing and marketing opiates in pill form -

Movie written by algorithm turns out to be hilarious and intense

by Annalee Newitz - Jun 9, 2016 3:30am PDT
Jun 9, 2016 3:30am PDT

arstechnica.com

The Multiverse / Explorations & meditations on sci-fi

Sunspring, a short science fiction movie written entirely by AI, debuts exclusively on Ars today. Ars is excited to be hosting this online debut of *Sunspring*, a short science fiction film that's not entirely what it seems. It's about three people living in a weird future, possibly on a space station, probably in a love triangle. You know it's the future because H (played with neurotic gravity by *Silicon Valley*'s Thomas Middleditch) is wearing a shiny gold jacket, H2 (Elisabeth Gray) is playing with computers, and C (Humphrey Ker) announces that he has to "go to the skull" before sticking his face into a bunch of green lights. It sounds like your typical sci-fi B-movie, complete with an incoherent plot. Except *Sunspring* isn't the product of Hollywood hacks—it was written entirely by an AI. To be specific, it was authored by a recurrent neural network called long short-term memory, or LSTM for short. At least, that's what we'd call it. The AI named itself Benjamin.

Knowing that an AI wrote *Sunspring* makes the movie more fun to watch, especially once you know how the cast and crew put it together. Director Oscar Sharp made the movie for Sci-Fi London, an annual film festival that includes the 48-Hour Film Challenge, where contestants are given a set of prompts (mostly props and lines) that have to appear in a movie they make over the next two days. Sharp's longtime collaborator, Ross Goodwin, is an AI researcher at New York University, and he supplied the movie's AI writer, initially called Jetson. As the cast gathered around a tiny printer, Benjamin spat out the screenplay, complete with almost impossible stage directions like "He is standing in the stars and sitting on the floor." Then Sharp randomly assigned roles to the actors in the room. "As soon as we had a read-through, everyone around the table was laughing their heads off with delight," Sharp told Ars. The actors interpreted the lines as they read, adding tone and body language, and the results are what you see in the movie. Somehow, a slightly garbled series of sentences became a tale of romance and murder, set in a dark future world. It even has its own musical interlude (performed by Andrew and Tiger), with a pop song Benjamin composed after learning from a corpus of 30,000 other pop songs.

Building Benjamin

When Sharp was in film school at NYU, he made a discovery that changed the course of his career. "I liked hanging out with technologists in NYU's Interactive Telecommunications Program more than other filmmakers," he confessed. That's how he met Goodwin, a former ghost writer who just earned a master's degree from NYU while studying natural language processing and neural networks. Speaking by phone from New York, the two recalled how they were both obsessed with figuring out how to make machines generate original pieces of writing. For years, Sharp wanted to create a movie out of random parts, even going so far as to write a play out of snippets of text chosen by dice rolls. Goodwin, who honed his machine-assisted authoring skills while ghost writing letters for corporate clients, had been using Markov chains to write poetry. As they got to know each other at NYU, Sharp told Goodwin about his dream of collaborating with an AI on a screenplay. Over a year and many algorithms later, Goodwin built an AI that could.

Benjamin is an LSTM recurrent neural network, a type of AI that is often used for text recognition. To train Benjamin, Goodwin fed the AI with a corpus of dozens of sci-fi screenplays he found online—mostly movies from the 1980s and 90s. Benjamin dissected them down to the letter, learning to

predict which letters tended to follow each other and from there which words and phrases tended to occur together. The advantage of an LSTM algorithm over a Markov chain is that it can sample much longer strings of letters, so it's better at predicting whole paragraphs rather than just a few words. It's also good at generating original sentences rather than cutting and pasting sentences together from its corpus. Over time, Benjamin learned to imitate the structure of a screenplay, producing stage directions and well-formatted character lines. The only thing the AI couldn't learn were proper names, because they aren't used like other words and are very unpredictable. So Goodwin changed all character names in Benjamin's screenplay corpus to single letters. That's why the characters in *Sunspring* are named H, H2, and C. In fact, the original screenplay had two separate characters named H, which confused the humans so much that Sharp dubbed one of them H2 just for clarity.

When Sharp and Goodwin entered *Sunspring* in the Sci-Fi London contest, they were delighted when the judges placed it into the top ten out of hundreds of entries. One judge, award-winning sci-fi author Pat Cadigan, said, "I'll give them top marks if they promise never to do this again." Before the final judging, audience members were allowed to vote online for their favorite film from the top ten. As the filmmakers watched thousands of votes rolling in, Goodwin realized something. "These guys are cheating; they're getting thousands of votes, they're getting bots to vote for themselves," he said to Sharp. That's when he and Sharp came up with a nefarious plan. "I said, [Benjamin] is going to outvote them at the last minute," Sharp recalled. "So we had him vote 36,000 times per hour in last hours of the contest, and he crushed the cheaters." Sharp immediately called Louis Savy, who runs the film festival, and confessed that their AI had voted for himself and that they wanted to distance themselves from the AI's actions. Savy thought that was hilarious and decided to interview the AI on stage during the award ceremony. Here's part of the transcript:

What do you think of your historic nomination against human opponents in this contest?

I was pretty excited.

I think I can see the feathers when they release their hearts. It's like a breakdown of the facts. So they should be competent with the fact that they won't be surprised.

What is the future of machine written entertainment?

It's a bit sudden.

I was thinking of the spirit of the men who found me and the children who were all manipulated and full of children. I was worried about my command. I was the scientist of the Holy Ghost.

What's next for you?

Here we go. The staff is divided by the train of the burning machine building with sweat. No one will see your face. The children reach into the furnace, but the light is still slipping to the floor. The world is still embarrassed.

The party is with your staff.

My name is Benjamin.

Ever since that day, Sharp and Goodwin have called the AI by its chosen name.

A mirror of our culture

For Sharp, the most interesting part of the Benjamin experiment has been learning about patterns in science fiction storytelling. Benjamin's writing sounds original, even kooky, but it's still based on

patterns he's discovered in what humans write. Sharp likes to call the results the "average version" of everything the AI looked at. Certain patterns kept coming up again and again. "There's an interesting recurring pattern in *Sunspring* where characters say, 'No I don't know what that is. I'm not sure,'" said Goodwin. "They're questioning the environment, questioning what's in front of them. There's a pattern in sci-fi movies of characters trying to understand the environment." Sharp added that this process has changed his perspective on writing. He keeps catching himself having Benjamin-like moments while working: "I just finished a sci-fi screenplay, and it's really interesting coming off this experience with Benjamin, thinking I have to have somebody say 'What the hell is going on?' Every time I use his tropes I think, oh of course. This is what sci-fi is about." Sharp's next project will be directing a movie called *Randle Is Benign*, about a computer scientist who creates the first superintelligent computer in 1981. "It's *uncanny* how much parts of the screenplay echo the experience of working with Benjamin," he said.

Of course, Benjamin is hardly an objective source of information about our sci-fi obsessions. His corpus was biased. "I built the corpus from movie scripts I could find on the Internet," said Goodwin (the titles are listed in *Sunspring*'s opening credits). But some stories got weighted more heavily than others, purely due to what was available. Explained Sharp, "There's only one entry on the list for *X-Files*, but that was every script from the show, and that was proportionally a lot of the corpus. In fact, most of the corpus is TV shows, like *Stargate: SG1* and every episode of *Star Trek* and *Futurama*." For a while, Sharp said, Benjamin kept "spitting out conversations between Mulder and Scully, [and you'd notice that] Scully spends more time asking what's going on and Mulder spends more time explaining."

For Sharp and Goodwin, making *Sunspring* also highlighted how much humans have been trained by all the scripts we've consumed. Sharp said this became especially obvious when the actors responded to *Sunspring*'s script as a love triangle. There is nothing inherently love triangle-ish about the script, and yet that felt like the most natural interpretation. "Maybe what we're learning here is that because of the average movie, the corpus of what we've watched, all of us have been following that pattern and tediously so," mused Sharp. "We are trained to see it, and to see it when it has not yet been imposed. It's profoundly bothersome." At the same time, it's a valuable lesson about how we are primed to expect certain tropes: "Ross [Goodwin] has created an amazing funhouse mirror to hold up to various bodies of cultural content and reflect what they are."

Author or tool or something else?

As I was talking to Sharp and Goodwin, I noticed that all of us slipped between referring to Benjamin as "he" and "it." We attributed motivations to the AI, and at one point Sharp even mourned how poorly he felt that he'd interpreted Benjamin's stage directions. It was as if he were talking about letting a person down when he apologized for only having 48 hours to figure out what it meant for one of the actors to stand in the stars and sit on the floor at the same time. "We copped out by making it a dream sequence," he said. But why should Sharp worry about that, if Benjamin is just a tool to be used however he and Goodwin would like? The answer is complicated, because the filmmakers felt as if Benjamin was a co-author, but also not really an author at the same time. Partly this boiled down to a question of authenticity. An author, they reasoned, has to be able to create something that's some kind of original contribution, in their own voice, even if it might be cliché. But Benjamin only creates screenplays based on what other people have written, so by definition it's not really authentic to his voice—it's just a pure reflection of what other people have said.

Though Goodwin began by saying he was certain that Benjamin was a tool, he finally conceded, "I

think we need a new word for it." Sharp agreed. It's clear that they believe there's something magic in what they've created, and it's easy to understand why when you watch *Sunspring*. The AI has captured the rhythm of science fiction writing, even if some of Benjamin's sentences are hilariously nonsensical. "We're going to see the money," C says at one point, right before H spits up his eyeball (he had to—it was an actual stage direction). Benjamin exists somewhere in between author and tool, writer and regurgitator.

As we wound down our conversation, Sharp and Goodwin offered me a chance to talk to Benjamin myself. We'd just been debating whether the AI was an author, so I decided to ask: "Are you an author?" Benjamin replied, "Yes you know what I'm talking about. You're a brave man." Fortified by Benjamin's compliments about my bravery, I forged ahead with another question. Given that Benjamin was calling himself the author of a screenplay, I asked whether he might want to join the Writers Guild of America, a union for writers. Again, Benjamin's answer was decisive. "Yes, I would like to see you at the club tomorrow," he said. It appears that this AI won't be rising up against his fellow writers—he's going to join us in solidarity. At least for now.

Listing image by Sunspring

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Indonesian village wiped out by mudflow now trying to attract tourists

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The land that was swallowed by mud: Eerie photos from the lost villages of Indonesia... ten years after they were wiped off the map

■ **These images were taken in the Sidoarjo regency of Indonesia where almost 40,000**

people have lost their homes

- **A mudflow eruption began a decade ago after an earthquake in the area. The spew of the mud continues today**
- **Statues have been put up to honour those who died as a result. The site has now become a tourist attraction**

By Qin Xie For Mailonline

Published: 06:59 EST, 29 May 2016 | Updated: 11:57 EST, 29 May 2016

These harrowing images reveal the realities of everyday life for those living in impoverished villages in the Sidoarjo regency of Indonesia.

A decade ago, the homes of these villagers were wiped out and their livelihoods destroyed by a mudflow eruption that displaced almost 40,000 people and took more than a dozen lives.

The eruption started two days after a 6.3 magnitude earthquake struck the region on May 27 in 2006.

Ten years on, the mud is still flowing and shows no signs of stopping. Statues, partially covered by the mud, have been erected to mark those who lost their lives to the tragedy.

Although compensation is in the pipelines from Indonesian oil and gas company, PT Lapindo Brantas, who have been deemed at least partially responsible for the disaster, it's been slow to reach those affected.

Extraordinarily, the residents have started making a life from tourism in the area thanks to the bus-loads of people who visit the site, bringing with them meagre sources of income for the villagers.

Survivor statues are displayed at mudflow areas to mark those who lost their lives in 2006, pictured here a decade on in May 2016

These harrowing images reveal the realities of everyday life for those living in impoverished villages in the Sidoarjo regency of Indonesia. Pictured is Saniaka, 80, who sits behind her house



A mudflow eruption displaced almost 40,000 people and took more than a dozen lives a decade ago. Today, survivor statues are displayed at mudflow areas to mark the lives of victims

Extraordinarily, the residents have started making a life from tourism in the area thanks to the bus-loads of people who visit the site, bringing with them meagre sources of income for the villagers. Above, Fitriani and her daughter Azizah play in front of their house



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Although compensation is in the pipelines from Indonesian oil and gas company, PT Lapindo Brantas, who have been deemed at least partially responsible for the disaster, it's been slow to reach those affected. Above, Suwadi, 75, stands behind his house

Many people lost their homes after the disaster. Above, Andi Irwanto, his wife Mintasih and their son Dimas, stand in

the remains of their house in Merisen Village

The eruption started two days after a 6.3 magnitude earthquake struck the region on May 27 in 2006. The mud continues to flow today. Above, a man walks past survivor statues displayed at mudflow areas

Unlike a normal volcanic eruption, the contents of the mudflow is mainly clay and water. Above, a view of an abandoned house destroyed by mudflow



Although the amount of mud that's spewed each day has fallen, the devastating effects can still be felt. Above, an abandoned house that was destroyed by the mudflow

Suwadi (left), 75, his wife, Saniaka (right), 80, and their son Yono (centre), stand behind their house which was affected by mudflow

The site has been officially cordoned off but people still visit the site and there are even tour guides leading tours to the area



Survivors pray at the mudflow areas to mark the 10 year anniversary of the disaster. The cause of the mudflow remains debated but Indonesian oil and gas company, PT Lapindo Brantas, has been deemed at least partially responsible

A woman works on the demolition site of a house. In the back, where the mudflow has stopped, nature has engulfed the rest of the village



The earthquake struck Yogyakarta on May 27, 2006, a city 150 miles west of a drill site in Sidoarjo, two days before the mudflow eruption

A view of the interior of a mosque destroyed by mudflow. The ground is entirely covered in dried mud (pictured above)

Suwadi, 75, stands behind his house.

Dried mud can be seen all over the ground around him and far into the distance

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'Ghost baby' caught on camera next to sleeping girl in cot

15:02, 2 Feb 2016 Updated 16:09, 17 Feb 2016 By Nicola Oakley

mirror.co.uk

Mum films 'ghost baby' in cot next to her sleeping daughter after spotting 'spirits' moving on monitor

A thoroughly spooked-out mum has captured what she believes to be two spirits interacting on her baby monitor.

Jade Yates uploaded the clip to Facebook, saying she didn't believe in ghosts "until about five minutes ago".

The mum took a video of her baby monitor, which was filming her daughter, Ruby, in bed. She explains that Ruby is the sleeping baby in the top left of the cot - but there's a rather mysterious 'presence' alongside her.

Jade insists that the room to Ruby's door was shut and there was nobody else in there, which goes little way to explaining the pale white figure sitting up in the bed.

Have you caught a ghost on camera? Share it with us using the form at the bottom of this article

She has her own theory, saying: "What I see is a baby older than Ruby, as it's able to sit up/stand up, and an adult attending to this baby/Ruby.

"I can see on some angles an ear, eyes and an arm..



Can you see it? Watch the video to see the 'ghost baby' move around

Can you see it? Watch the video to see the 'ghost baby' move around

She added that "Ruby was not unsettled at all but she does wake every hour or so at night" before suggesting that a ghost "wanting to play" could be the reason why.

"I don't think they are nasty as the adult looks to be so attentive."

Jade said she had been watching what she believed to be two spirits for about 20 minutes before going to check on her daughter and thinks she 'disturbed' them, as they were gone when she came back to view the monitor.

She added that she was posting it to let people make up their own minds before saying she was 'one freaked out mumma'.

Donna Cass commented: "That is so spooky Jade. I don't think I'd be sleeping much either if I was you."

Elisha Jayde Currer said she could see two faces in the video, "an old lady with a younger girl with a side fringe."

While most viewers said it was worrying, Carl Higgins called it "awesome", commenting: "Don't be scared, you will know if they aren't friendly, if they do keep you up at night you can ask them to leave! I've had my fair share of dealings with ghosts."

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Spanish Mummy Bears Resemblance to Van Gogh

May 26, 2016 08:31 AM ET

seeker.com



See Photos: Church of Mummies

Some thirty mummies were found during restoration work in the church of the Assumption of Our Lady in the village of Quinto, near Zaragoza, Spain. The church, also known as the "Piquete," had suffered structural damage during the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939).

Credit: Instituto de Estudios Científicos en Momias, Madrid



The mummies were discovered when a part of the church floor was removed to install a heating system in 2011.

Credit: Instituto de Estudios Científicos en Momias, Madrid

To the workers' surprise, the mummified bodies, some in very good state of preservation, emerged from partly opened wooden coffins.

Credit: Instituto de Estudios Científicos en Momias, Madrid



The bodies were mummified naturally thanks to the very dry soil. They date from the late 18th to mid-19th century, based on their clothing.

Credit: Instituto de Estudios

Científicos en Momias, Madrid



Some had unusually well preserved facial hair.

Credit: Jorge Sesé

All mummified bodies - 11 adults and 24 children - were stored in a chapel of the church, and there they remained, wrapped in cloths, waiting for analysis.

Credit: Instituto de Estudios Científicos en Momias, Madrid



In 2014 a project was finally launched to study and restore the collection exhumed in the church and a lab was created at the site.

Credit: Instituto de Estudios Científicos en Momias, Madrid



Among the mummified bodies, one bears an impressive resemblance to the famous self-portrait by Vincent Van Gogh.

The individual, who might have been in his 40's when he died, was found clothed in Franciscan habits.

Credit: Instituto de Estudios Científicos en Momias, Madrid

Most mummies still have perfectly preserved hair and beards.

"Hair usually maintains very well in dry environments, especially if there are no insects such as Dermestidae, or skin beetles," González said.

Credit: Instituto de Estudios Científicos en Momias, Madrid



The mummies were CT scanned to find potential pathologies. The researchers are currently waiting for the results that were sent to several international institutions. González noted that in the region of Aragon, to which Quinto belongs, there were several epidemics.

Credit: María Belchi



The large number of children found in the burials suggests that epidemics were the main cause of death. So far the children studied range in age from six to nine months and seven years old. In this CT scans it appears the child has a possible pathology in his right foot.

Credit: Instituto de Estudios Científicos en Momias, Madrid



González, who is continuing restoration work on the mummies, will detail preliminary scientific results at the World Congress on Mummy Studies which takes place in August in Lima, Peru.

Credit: Instituto de Estudios Científicos en Momias, Madrid

A well preserved mummy which bears an impressive resemblance to Van Gogh's famous self-portrait has been found in an ancient church in Spain.

The individual, whose real name is unknown, is one of 30 mummified bodies that were found during restoration work in the church of the Assumption of Our Lady in the village of Quinto, near Zaragoza.



The burials were unearthed in 2011, when a part of the floor of the church, also known as the "Piquete," was removed to install the heating system.

To the workers' surprise, 30 mummified bodies, some in very good states of preservation, emerged from the partly opened wooden coffins.



All mummified bodies --11 adults and 24 children -- were then stored in a chapel of the church, and there they remained, wrapped in cloths, waiting for examination.

In 2014 a project was finally launched to study and restore the collection exhumed in the church and a lab was created at the site.



"The project is still ongoing. We have begun with five mummies, two adults and three children," Mercedes González, director of the Instituto de Estudios Científicos en Momias in Madrid, told Discovery News.

Mummified naturally thanks to the very dry soil, the bodies date from the late 18th until mid-19th century, based on

the clothing of the mummies.

Some male mummies wore monk clothes.

"In Spain it was very common for people to be buried with habits of a religious order. Some of these mummies wear Franciscan habits, but they are not monks," González said.

Actual monks were buried barefoot. The mummies of Quinto wear espadrilles, a kind of shoe

typical of the Aragon region.

"They are made of straw and cotton and were used by peasants," González said.

Most mummies still have hair and beards perfectly preserved.

"Hair usually maintains very well in dry environments, especially if there are no insects such as Dermestidae, or skin beetles," González said.

The "Van Gogh" mummy, who might have been in his 40's when he died, is one of such clothed in Franciscan habits, but little is known about him, his diseases and cause of death.

"We are waiting for the results of histological analysis that were sent to several international institutions in Italy, Korea, Nebraska and Brazil," González said.

She noted that in the region of Aragon, to which Quinto belongs, there were several epidemics. In the 18th century, smallpox and yellow fever ravaged the region, while in the 19th century epidemics of cholera claimed many lives.

According to Raffaella Bianucci, a bio-anthropologist in the Legal Medicine Section at the University of Turin, the mummies' excellent state of preservation allows a minimally invasive, in-depth study of skeletal and soft tissue pathologies.

"Should it be confirmed that some of them died from cholera, an investigations should be carried out to identify historical cholera strains that might provide information on the microevolution of the bacterium *Vibrio cholerae*," Bianucci said.

The large number of children found in the burials might hint to epidemics as the main cause of death. So far the children studied show an age between 6-9 months and 7 years old. CT scans carried out at the Royo Villanova Hospital in Zaragoza, revealed one of them has a possible pathology in his right foot.

"We are just studying it," González said.

She will detail the preliminary results at the World Congress on Mummy Studies which takes place in August in Lima, Peru.

"By that time, we hope we can give a name to the 'Van Gogh' mummy and know more about his life," González said.

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Murals of Maxo Vanka

atlasobscura.com

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Murals of Maxo Vanka

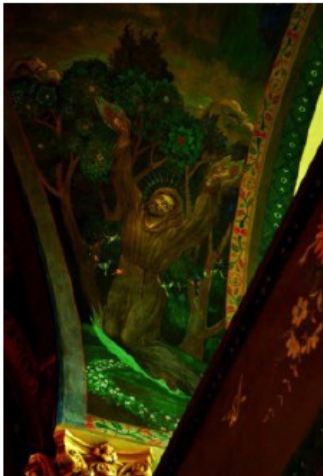
Long hidden under grime, the politically radical murals of a little known Yugoslavian master are finally getting their due.



Maxo Vanka, 1946 Wikimedia, fair use



Murals of
Maxo Vanka
**Stephen J
Taylor** (Atlas
Obscura
User)
Murals of
Maxo Vanka
**Stephen J
Taylor** (Atlas
Obscura
User)
Murals of
Maxo Vanka
**Stephen J
Taylor** (Atlas Obscura
User)



Tucked away in the gritty working-class Pittsburgh suburb of Millvale and hidden behind the walls of an unprepossessing Catholic church are some of the most extraordinary and overlooked murals of the 1930s and '40s.

Created in protest against industrial capitalism, World War I, and the rise of Fascism, the paintings are the work of a Croatian expatriate artist, Maximilijan "Maxo" Vanka, sometimes called "Pittsburgh's Diego Rivera." If you prefer legend to history, that's here, too: St. Nicholas Catholic Church is also the site of one of Pittsburgh's lesser-known ghost stories.

Though his origins are obscure, Maxo Vanka (1889-1963) is rumored to have been the bastard child of Hapsburg nobility. Born in the days when Croatia was still part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the infant Vanka was given away and raised by Croatian peasants until his maternal grandmother discovered him at the age of eight. She allegedly sent him to live in a castle. Vanka went on to study art in Zagreb and Brussels, graduating with top honors in 1914, the year World War I broke out. The 25-year-old artist—already a confirmed pacifist—joined the Belgian Red Cross as a medic and saw some of the worst horrors of the war on the Western Front.

In the 1920s, Maxo Vanka became one of Yugoslavia's leading painters, but in 1934, with Fascism on



the rise in Europe, he immigrated to the United States.

St. Nicholas Catholic Church in Millvale, Pennsylvania, was the first ethnic Croatian parish in the U.S.

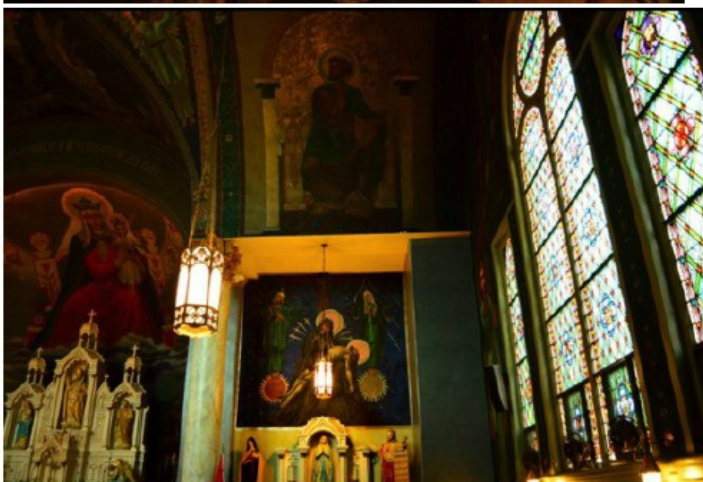
Its parish priest in 1937 was Father Albert Zagar, who commissioned Vanka—like most of his own flock, an immigrant—to paint a set of murals at the new church.

Vanka was an unorthodox choice for the job of creating what has since been called Pittsburgh's "Sistine Chapel." Though he described himself as spiritual, Vanka wasn't a practising Catholic, he was friendly to Socialist politics, and was also married to an American Jew (Margaret Stetten, daughter of a New York surgeon).



Over the course of eight weeks between April and June 1937, the artist completed the first round of murals—eleven paintings all told. The rest were finished in the summer of 1941, just months before the U.S. entered World War II.

Though Vanka's Millvale murals depict a plethora of traditional Christian religious themes, he brilliantly wove his own anxieties into the old Christian story, graphically illustrating the evils of money, the horrors of poverty and war, and Croatia's "crucifixion" by the Ustaše, a homegrown Fascist organization that was also fiercely Catholic and anti-Semitic. The murals are an



incredible translation of Christian motifs into 1940s politics. In two startling images, Jesus and the Virgin Mary are bayoneted by American doughboys; in another, an androgynous "Spirit of Injustice" toting the garb of a nun wears a gas mask and holds a bleeding sword and a set of scales in which money outweighs bread; in yet another, a female depiction of the artist's beloved Croatian homeland hangs chained by her arms to a horrid cross, the life slowly draining out of her.

Several of Vanka's murals delve into the travails of American labor. In one image, the dark, satanic mills and mines of western

Pennsylvania—once the king of American steel production—burn ominously in the distance while a dead or dying worker lies huddled on the ground surrounded by weeping nuns. Over the entrance to the church, an American capitalist in a top hat eats a sumptuous breakfast brought in by a black servant. As this king of industry (a jab at Pittsburgh's rich) pores over a stock report, a skeleton reaches out toward him, cupping a handful of fire. The year is 1941.

Several of Vanka's paintings could be set either in Europe or America. One shows the resurrected Christ giving his blessing to a working-class family dressed in traditional Croatian clothing, surely showing



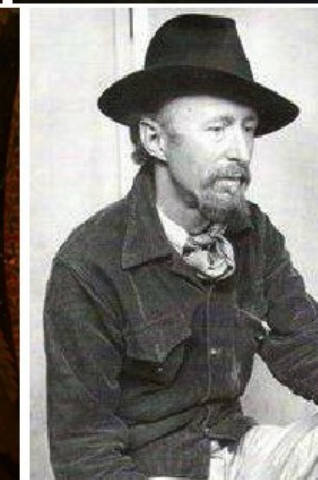
Jesus' solidarity with their struggle to survive. Around the altar and under a large painting of the Virgin and Child with a Croatian inscription, Vanka's countrymen in folk dress gather to watch the Mass. Vanka later wrote: "These murals are my contribution to America -- not only mine, but my immigrant people's, who are grateful, like me, that they are not in the slaughter of Europe."

Then there's the ghost. One night in 1937, a contemporary legend goes, Vanka was up late, hurrying to finish the first round of murals. That's when he saw "The Millvale Specter." This is the title of an article published in



the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette on March 28, 1938. (The story later came out in Harper's Magazine.)

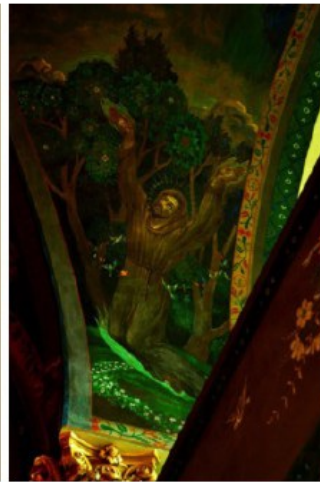
As Father Zagar told the tale, the distraught Vanka claimed to have seen a "black-robed figure making gestures at



the altar" that night. Zagar himself had already heard of this ghost, but never seen it, "because the Croats have believed for many years the ghost of a former pastor comes back

at night to pay penance for failing to serve the parish well." The priest stood outside the church door to make sure no one else came in. Zagar swore that he heard dogs howling outside, though only Vanka himself saw the spirit, moving down the aisle. The painter almost collapsed in fright, then saw the ghost blow out a candle in the sanctuary. "Never before had it gone out," said Father Zagar. "I saw the sweat run down the face of Vanka." Zagar offered to say prayers for the dead priest, one of his predecessors, who (if Catholic belief is correct) was in Purgatory, haunting the living to get their attention and encourage them to pray for the still-troubled dead.

Maximilijan Vanka went on to teach art at a community college in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, outside



Philadelphia, but he never acquired lasting fame in the U.S. His Millvale paintings remain his greatest work. In 1963, while swimming off the coast of Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, he drowned in the Pacific. Some believe he died of a heart attack, others that he swam out to sea on purpose. His widow Margaret later became a friend of the great Pittsburgh-born California poet Robinson Jeffers and donated many of her husband's works to the Croatian Academy of



Scrovegni Chapel



The Triumph of Death

Science and Arts.

Tragically, Vanka's murals were nearly lost to air pollution and mildew. In just a few short decades, Pittsburgh's notoriously dirty air and the lack of air conditioning inside the church took a severe toll. Even some regular parishioners at St. Nicholas were unaware that these stunning murals lay hidden underneath the grime coating the walls. Professional restoration is ongoing today—with some dark squares left in a few places to show the extent of the filth that once covered these murals. The restoration is spectacular and these historic paintings—an amazing testimony to the coming-together of faith, art and social justice—are set to become one of the city's greatest off-the-beaten path attractions.

Know Before You Go

Millvale is a historic suburb of Pittsburgh just across the 40th Street Bridge from Lawrenceville on the Allegheny River. St. Nicholas Croatian Catholic Church sits at the top of a steep incline. Driving here can be rough, but a small parking lot is available right outside the church. In-depth tours (about an hour long) are offered on Saturdays and Sundays from 1-4 p.m and are led by professional guides wielding spotlights to illuminate the murals. Tours are free, but a \$5 donation is appreciated. You can also see the murals during the 12 p.m. mass on Sundays. Non-flash photography is permitted during tours.

40.4770

-79.9696

Address

24 Maryland Ave
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, 15209
United States

Website

The Murals of Maxo Vanka

Contributed By

Stephen J Taylor

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Who (or WHAT) is Behind Four Gruesome Murders in THE DOLL CEMETERY?

blumhouse.com

Who (or WHAT) is Behind Four Gruesome Murders in THE DOLL CEMETERY?



Image Credit: iStock/Freddie's Fab Design

Gregory Burkart

May 26, 2016

This deeply disturbing creepypasta is credited to a user known only as CMT, who posted their account of these horrific events in late 2013. No updates have come from that user since then, but their story has developed a reputation as one of the all-time scariest doll-related mysteries, with direct parallels to the infamous "Island of the Dolls" in Xochimilco, Mexico.

Unlike that infamous island (which still draws a fair amount of macabre tourism), the location of the so-called "Doll Cemetery"

remains a mystery — though based on CMT's British-standard spelling, we're reasonably sure it lies outside the United States.

Details about the surrounding area are equally sketchy, but it's described as a small valley where little to no vegetation has grown for decades. Instead of living, growing things, this land seems to yield a nightmarish crop of once-lifelike objects — specifically, dolls of every shape, size and form.



Image Credit: iStock/Dan Brandenburg

Cracked porcelain antiques, threadbare rag and yarn dolls, mass-market plastic baby dolls, Barbies and other fashion dress-up figures... every kind of doll seems to have come here to die.

Most of these are not merely strewn across the barren ground, but instead are nailed to dead tree branches, mutilated and dismembered, or tied to rocks and stumps. Some were partially buried, their blank, pale faces peering out from the desolate earth.

No one knows when the first doll was left here, who did it, or why... but somehow it evolved into a local tradition, with children

throughout the surrounding communities discarding their unwanted dolls in the area.

But despite this long-running custom, the children were also warned not to go near the Doll Cemetery after dark. Not for any specific reason; there was just something about the place that felt... *wrong*.

According to CMT's account, the Doll Cemetery actually had a caretaker of sorts: an elderly hermit who lived in an abandoned shack in the midst of the valley. While no one actually *gave* him that job, it seems the man took it very seriously, and watched over the dolls day and night.



Image Credit: iStock/Dan Brandenburg

The locals didn't even know his name, and didn't really *want* to know... until the day something very bad happened.

When three local teenage girls — all of them classmates and close friends — failed to show up at school, their respective families first suspected they were just playing hooky from their classes. But after all three failed to return home, the neighborhood began to panic.

Police were alerted, investigations commenced and search parties were formed, and before long attention turned to the old man in the Doll Cemetery, and murmurs of suspicion about his weird behavior quickly twisted into unsubstantiated claims that he was a child molester.

Locals became increasingly agitated as the days wore on without any further clues to the girls' disappearance, and despite the lack of evidence against the caretaker (including the fact that no one had ever seen him come into town), they became convinced he was somehow responsible, and a small group of men took matters into their own hands.

The search party arrived at the Doll Cemetery to discover that their most horrible



Image Credit: iStock/resevac

fears had come true... but not in the way they expected.

At the edge of the valley, they found the first of the three missing girls: her arms seemingly open in welcome, she was tied to a dead, skeletal tree, her head dangling on a broken neck.



Image Credit: iStock/Dragan Saponjic

The second girl was halfway down the valley, leaned against a rotten tree trunk, her face obscured by her own blood. Upon closer examination, she had been partially mutilated — her ears had been ripped from her head.

The search party's rage quickly melted into terror when they realized they were dealing with something far more dangerous than a feeble old man... and that was before they found the corpse of the third missing girl.

She had been thrown to the ground directly in front of the caretaker's shack, her limbs askew, fallen in a puddle of her own

coagulated blood. Her face and neck were covered with tiny round lesions... which, upon closer examination, looked like bites.



Image Credit: iStock/Anthony SP

But they didn't resemble bug or animal bites. These seemed to have been caused by *tiny human mouths*.

Before they knew how to mentally process what they'd seen, the men began to smell something horrible emanating from the hermit's tiny shed. They reacted instinctively, kicking down the door, expecting an attack... not knowing from *what*.

Instead, they found a *fourth* corpse: it was the old man. His body had been horrifically mutilated, in the same manner as the third girl, and had apparently been decomposing for weeks.

In the chaos and confusion of their panicked escape, the men from the town stumbled through piles of dolls and doll parts... but it wasn't until they were near the perimeter of the valley that one of the men realized that something had snagged on his trouser leg.



Image Credit: iStock/Dan Brandenburg

It was the tiny hand of a doll, which almost looked as if it were clutching at the fabric, hanging on with purpose. The man reflexively swatted at the doll, reacting as if he'd discovered a live tarantula crawling up his leg.

The men retreated to the town as quickly as they could, and never returned. The matter was still left to police... but as of this writing, the four murders remain unsolved.

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The mystery of England's ancient tunnels

bbc.com



More than a dozen tunnels have been found beneath Cornwall's

Halliggye Fogou, Cornwall, England, Britain, United Kingdom, Europe (Credit: Credit: Amanda Ruggeri)

countryside, dating back some 2,400 years. But why do they exist?

• By Amanda Ruggeri

2 June 2016

"How do you like spiders?" asked James Gossip, an archaeologist, British prehistory expert and my guide to this subterranean world – one, apparently, that's already inhabited. I looked at him, blanching slightly. He laughed. "Shall I just not point them out?"

"Maybe not," I said, peering into the dark tunnel before us.

I'd come to nearly the very tip of Cornwall, the southwestern peninsula of England, in search of an ancient mystery: the underground passages built here some 2,400 years ago.

As a casual observer, you'd never know this part of the country had prehistoric surprises in store. Halliggye Fogou, on Cornwall's Lizard Peninsula, is not only off the tourist track – it's off any beaten track. The largest town within a 10-mile radius, Helston, has just 12,000 residents. The lush green hills are dotted with cows and itty-bitty villages lacking even a post box.



Just outside Helston (Credit: Credit: Kevin Britland/Alamy)

At first glance, the Lizard Peninsula, shown here just outside of Helston, seems to have more picturesque countryside than prehistoric surprises (Credit: Kevin Britland/Alamy)

From this picture-perfect Cornish countryside, only a trained eye can pick out the complex tapestry of mounds, bumps and stones left by 150 generations working the land. "Do you see that, over where the windmills are?" Gossip asked me later, pointing to the

nearly imperceptible humps on a hill in the distance. "That's covered by Bronze Age barrows." Enclosures – those bumpers of land that once surrounded a farm or settlement – are everywhere. And the landscape is littered with the remnants of roundhouses, stone circles and ramparts.



Stone circle on Bodmin Moor (Credit: Credit: Paul Nash/Alamy)

Much of Cornwall is littered with ancient ruins, like this stone circle on Bodmin Moor, about 50 miles north of Halliggye Fogou (Credit: Paul Nash/Alamy)

Gossip, though, is most interested in what people were building underground. Fourteen tunnels – called "fogous" after the Cornish word for cave "ogo" – have been found in Cornwall. Similar to the souterrains found in Scotland, Ireland, Brittany and Normandy, fogous haven't been discovered anywhere else in

England. Unlike, say, the labyrinthine copper mines tunnelled out 3,800 years ago in Wales, fogous (and souterrains) weren't merely dug. They were built. To make them, it's thought that people opened up deep trenches in the ground, sided them with stone slabs, topped them with capstones and filled in the area above them.

For an Iron Age society, this required a serious devotion of time and resources – and no one knows why they would have done so.



Halliggye Fogou (Credit: Credit: Amanda Ruggeri)

Standing in the tunnel's entrance, archaeologist James Gossip peers back into Halliggye Fogou (Credit: Amanda Ruggeri)

Some of the difficulty is that many of Cornwall's fogous may already have been emptied. This may have been done by the people who actually used them. Or it may have occurred far later. "Many of them were excavated by antiquarians, so we don't have many good records for what was found," said archaeologist Susan Greaney, head properties

historian at English Heritage, who specialises in prehistory. "There are only a couple that have been excavated in modern times – and they don't seem to be structures that really easily give up their secrets."

Take Halliggye Fogou, the best preserved fogou in Cornwall. Its first, 1.8m-high chamber is large enough to easily move around in. But at the end of the 8.4m passage, it abruptly narrows into another, 4m-long tunnel, one just 0.75m tall. "It's something anyone would have to crawl along," Gossip pointed out.

Looking down the entrance tunnel of Halliggye Fogou to the 0.75m-tall 4m-long tunnel (Credit: AlanWrigley/Alamy)



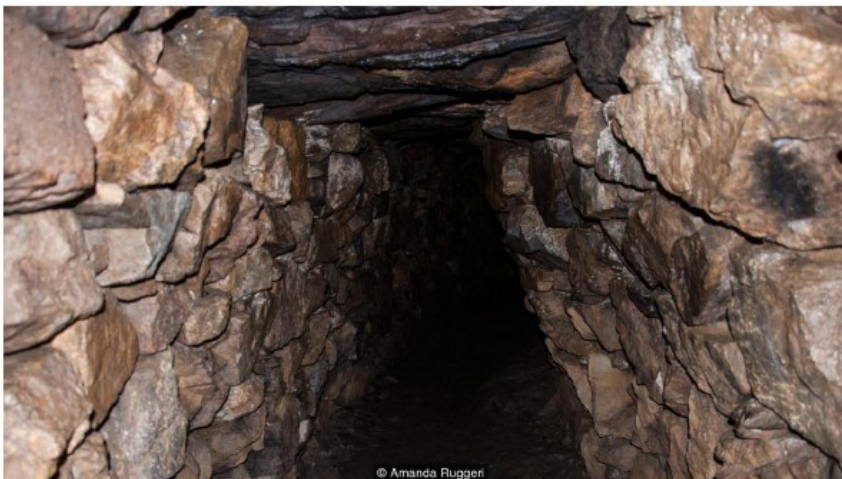
The small tunnel in Halliggye Fogou (Credit: AlanWrigley/Alamy)

Another tunnel branches to the left off the entrance tunnel. At 27m, it's three times the length of the first chamber – the distance of two double-decker buses laid end to end – and became progressively darker as we walked further inside. Darkest of all, though, was the final creep, tucked to the left of the end of the passage. Complete with a stone lip jutting up to trip you, the entrance was so narrow and awkward I had to put down my clunky camera in order to clamber through.

In other words, none of it seemed designed for easy access – a characteristic that's as emblematic of fogous as it is perplexing.

"A lot of the discussion around fogous is what they were for, because they're really strange," Gossip said. "Many people talk about them as a place to hide."

But as he switched off his torch, the likelihood of the hypothesis vanished along with the light. Damp, chilly, and the kind of black that modern-day humans don't tend to witness, it seemed a strange sort of hideaway for even the most desperate of times – or even with the most reliable of flames. "A person wouldn't have wanted to spend much time in here," he said.



Second chamber in Halliggye (Credit: Amanda Ruggeri)

The second main chamber in Halliggye Fogou is 27m long – and intensely dark (Credit: Amanda Ruggeri)

Meanwhile, although these tunnels seem "secret" to us today, they weren't necessarily then. Many have lintels that would have been visible from the surface, for example – making them an odd hiding place from intruders.

Over the years, other hypotheses have surfaced. Perhaps fogous were burial grounds: when Reverend Richard Polwhele recorded entering the Halliggye Fogou in 1803, he wrote that it "contained urns". But the access hole that he made in its roof was used by other enthusiasts in ensuing years, and any urns are now gone. No evidence of burial, whether cremation ashes or bone, has been found in any of the six fogous that have been examined with modern archaeological techniques.

Were they used for storage? The soil is acidic, which helps explain the lack of organic material, like grain and bone. Still, it's an impractical design for a cold store. As Greaney put it: "If you're going to build an underground fridge, you're going to want to be able to step in and out of it."

And if fogous were used for valuables or metals – like local tin, perhaps – the quirky, yet likely still visible,

design is odd; so is the fact that not a single ingot has been found.



Fogou of Carn Euny (Credit: QEDimages/Alamy)

Peering down the 20m-long fogou of Carn Euny, an Iron Age settlement located 20 miles west of Halliggye Fogou (Credit: QEDimages/Alamy)

The last prominent theory also seems unsatisfying, if only because it's a frequent go-to for archaeologists who study a period as little understood as this one: maybe they were mainly ceremonial. Perhaps they were meant to be accessed only by the elite, with the restricted space echoing the restrictions of social

class. Or perhaps they were places to commune with the gods.

"These were lost religions. We don't know what people were worshipping," Gossip said. But, he added, since they were often used over hundreds of years, their purpose probably shifted. And perhaps the real answer was all of the above: "There's no reason they couldn't have had a ceremonial, spiritual purpose as well as, say, storage."



Carn Euny (Credit: Steve Atkins Photography/Alamy)

The Iron Age settlement of Carn Euny (Credit: Steve Atkins Photography/Alamy)

Richard Strachan, senior archaeologist for Historic Environment Scotland, manages the nine souterrains under the public body's care.

Archaeologists have faced many of the same conundrums there, from the odd shape of the tunnels (in Scotland, Strachan said, they're banana-shaped, curving around a roundhouse, or in a cruciform) to the cleaned-out

nature of their interiors. He agrees they probably had more than one use.

"I think they're multi-purpose," Strachan said. "Maybe seasonal, as well. Maybe you use them for storage, then when you don't need them for storage, you use them for ceremony."

Souterrains in Scotland, like this one in the Isle of Skye, have a number of similarities with Cornwall's fogous (Credit: Ian Payton/Alamy)

Gossip is hoping that another site, located just three miles northeast of Halliggye Fogou, might reveal a bit more. Like many of the others, the Boden Fogou was found serendipitously – a farmer struck a pit while laying pipe in his field in 1991. Five years later, it happened again, his tractor opening up a hole in the ground. Both holes led to tunnels.

A trench from the excavation of Boden's prehistoric settlement by Gossip and his team (Credit: Amanda



An Isle of Skye souterrain (Credit: Credit: Ian Payton/Alamy)



Excavation at Boden (Credit: Credit: Amanda Ruggeri)



Pottery shards from Boden (Credit: Credit: Amanda Ruggeri)

Ruggeri)

Ensuing excavations, which Gossip has run with volunteers each summer since 2003, have turned up not only an S-shaped fogou, but roundhouses and enclosures. In fact, every recorded fogou has been found within settlements.

One 3,400-year-old roundhouse that the team excavated was abandoned 300 years after its construction. It contained more than 3,000 artefacts, mainly shards of ceramics. In a pattern seen at other roundhouses in Britain, they weren't where they would have fallen naturally – the shards seem scattered deliberately across the floor. Some came from an enormous, elaborately decorated vessel at least 0.92m high. "It's the largest Bronze Age vessel found in Cornwall, if not in Britain," Gossip said.

Gossip examines one of the pottery shards found in the Boden excavation (Credit: Amanda Ruggeri)

The S-shaped fogou was dug 700 years after the roundhouse was abandoned, carefully skirting the roundhouse site. "When people come here in 400BC, they don't disturb the place, perhaps out of respect," Gossip said. About 500 years later, it too was deliberately closed, perhaps in a similarly ceremonial way. Early Iron Age pottery was placed on the bedrock floor, the roof was removed and dirt and stone from the surrounding bank shovelled

in.

Looking through the (now open-air) Boden fogou (Credit: James Gossip)

This is a pattern also seen with other souterrains. All of it seems to speak to a kind of closing ceremony. But for a structure built to do... what?



Boden fogou (Credit: Credit: James Gossip)

What, I asked Gossip, could he find in his excavations that might help answer the question? Is there a Rosetta Stone for fogous?

"I would like to find something that suggested a more ceremonial purpose," he said. He paused. "But no matter what you found, there would still be discussion."

This story is a part of BBC Britain – a series focused on exploring this extraordinary island, one

story at a time. Readers outside of the UK can see every BBC Britain story by heading to the Britain homepage; you also can see our latest stories by following us on Facebook and Twitter.

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Nails spill on Ohio highway during rush hour, flatten tires

June 1, 2016

yahoo.com

<https://www.yahoo.com/news/nails-spill-ohio-highway-during-rush-hour-flatten-151047622.html?nhp=1>

PERRYSBURG, Ohio (AP) — Authorities in Ohio say a load of nails spilled on a roadway during rush hour, leaving about a dozen commuters with flat tires.

State troopers say one lane of traffic on Interstate 475 just south of Toledo was closed for over an hour Wednesday morning to clean up the spill.

Troopers estimate that there were about 200 nails scattered across the roadway.

The spill happened at around 7 a.m. between Perrysburg and Maumee (maw-MEE'). No one was hurt.

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Naked man on meth allegedly trespassed, stole Otter Tail River boat

twincities.com

By Jeff Meier / Fergus Falls Daily Journal |
May 27, 2016 | UPDATED: 18 hours ago

A Waseca man who allegedly burglarized an Ottertail home on Monday may have also stolen a fishing boat, according to Otter Tail County District Court documents.

Tyler Robert Janovksy, 33, reportedly stole the boat from a location on Otter Tail River about a mile away from the trespassed home in Ottertail, the court complaint states. The keys were reportedly left in the ignition of the boat.

Janovsky, the complaint says, drove the boat down Otter Tail River into a section where it flows into Otter Tail Lake. It says the boat became stuck on a sandbar. Janovsky, court documents say, tried to walk off the boat onto shore and either stepped or fell into deeper water, getting his clothes wet — a possible explanation why he was naked when he allegedly trespassed in the home.

Janovsky also allegedly admitted to being high on methamphetamine during the incident, the complaint said.

This investigation stemmed from the 16-foot fishing boat being found by Otter Tail County deputies on Otter Tail Lake in the backyard of the trespassed home. The boat and supplies onboard are estimated to be worth \$10,000.

Janovsky was discovered by the homeowner while naked around 7 a.m. Monday, and they allegedly got into a fight.

The court complaint states Janovsky allegedly grabbed a three-pound exercise weight and attempted to hit the homeowner with it during the fight. The homeowner was able to disarm him and hold him at the home until deputies and Henning Ambulance staff arrived at the home.

Both suffered injuries in the fight. The homeowner had minor injuries and Janovsky was taken to Lake Region Healthcare in Fergus Falls. Janovsky was later released from the hospital and taken to Otter Tail County jail.

Janovsky had his first appearance in Otter Tail County District Court Wednesday. He was charged with first-degree burglary of an occupied home, second-degree assault with a dangerous weapon and fifth-degree assault.

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This former NASA engineer has debunked pretty much every online UFO sighting

sciencealert.com

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FIONA MACDONALD
7 JUN 2016

If you have eyes and use the internet, you've probably seen more than your fair share of stories about UFO sightings. Whether its strange clouds that look like spaceships, ominous looking blurs filmed from the International Space Station, or rogue meteors, the world wide web loves a good alien conspiracy.

But former NASA engineer James Oberg has taken it upon himself to trawl through all the sightings and stories out there and politely debunk them, using science.

The conclusion? Most of your "insane UFO sightings" are little more than 'space dandruff', or your brain misunderstanding of what space travel actually looks like, says Oberg.

As Cara Giaimo from Atlas Obscura reports, after working at NASA mission control in the late '90s, Oberg went on to become a space journalist and historian. It wasn't until a few years ago that he started to take UFO sightings seriously.

His goal isn't to simply crap all over true believers - he calls that "stomping on dormice" - instead he's interested in teasing out exactly what's going on in these images and videos, and trying to figure out why people are reacting so strongly to them.

His hypothesis? Our human senses are so used to focussing on relatively slow-moving objects, as well as certain light and atmosphere conditions, that when things change, our brains get confused.

"Our sensory system is functioning absolutely perfectly for Earth conditions," Oberg told Giaimo. "But we're still a local civilisation. Moving beyond our neighbourhood has been visually confusing."

Some of the most common sighting he has to debunk are to do with NASA astronauts reportedly seeing UFOS and being forced to keep silent, which Oberg says is a result of us watching too much sci-fi and not really understanding what space really looks like.

"I've had enough experience with real spaceflight to realise that what's being seen in many videos is nothing beyond the 'norm' from fully mundane phenomena occurring in unearthly settings," Oberg writes over on his site.

Here are some of the more common reports you might have seen on the interwebs, and Oberg's explanation of what's really going on:

UFO sightings at the International Space Station

The real story? Space dandruff, which are things that have shed off space vehicles during flight, like ice flakes, paint chips, or fragments of insulation. They're different to space junk, because they don't pose a real threat to spacecraft, Oberg explains on his site.

These flecks of dandruff are pretty common, but the reason they look so weird to us is that we're not used to the way these objects look when they fall while the space station is travelling through space.

It's the same reason why people see so many UFOs in the footage filmed by the cameras attached to NASA's old space shuttle missions.

In these videos, people usually freak out because the spots seem to dance in and out of view, or suddenly appear and disappear. Which is pretty creepy if you're sitting at your computer on Earth, but isn't that weird if you're on a space shuttle travelling 28,000 km/h (17,500 mph) - nothing's going to stay in your frame of vision very long.

And if the spacecraft is in the right position in relation to the Sun, it can also cast its shadow onto these objects to make them disappear and reappear, which is known as 'twilight shadowing'.

That weird Californian flare across the night sky

At the end of last year, people in southern California freaked out when they saw a bright white light shoot across the night sky.

But, as was cleared up pretty soon after the incident, it was actually the result of a planned, unarmed missile test by the US Navy. That strange looking trail of light was the plume of particles blasted out by the rocket thruster.

So why did it look so creepy to everyone else? Because here on Earth, we're used to seeing thin vapour trails left by planes, or billowing smoke plumes. But most of us have rarely (if ever) seen anything so big and sharp as this.

"There were thousands of people who were absolutely processing their visual stimuli correctly if [the plume] was a mile away or 10 miles away [16 km]," Oberg told Atlas Obscura. "But it was 300 miles [482 km] away, up in space and sunlit, which never occurred to them, because this is not something within the normal range of human experience."

All of this isn't to say we should give up on sharing our UFO sightings, or assuming that everything is 'normal'.

"It's good to keep scanning space video for possible anomalies and reporting them quickly," Oberg told The Huffington Post back in 2013.

"The reason is, there is always a real chance that it could be a genuine anomaly, either a spacecraft malfunction or other threat, expected or unexpected. In the past, missions have failed because a clue that should have been seen out the window was overlooked."

Head over to Atlas Obscura to read the full interview, and more debunkings, with Oberg.

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Nazi History Hunters Set Sights on Hitler's Secret Nukes

nbcnews.com

Jun 5 2016, 11:58 am ET

by Andy Eckardt

ARNSTADT, Germany — They hunt for jewels and gold, the long-hidden plunder of Nazi lore. Now hobby historians in Germany believe they have an urgent case of potentially catastrophic proportions — secret nuclear bombs.

Deep inside the Thuringian Forest, 70-year-old Peter Lohr and two friends have been scanning the surface with "earth radar" and "geomagnetic" technology after one of Lohr's companions found Allied aerial surveillance photos of what they believe is a Nazi storage facility.



Image: Nazi treasure hunter story

Walter Boegenhold, 67, and Ralf Ehmann, 60, look at ground radar graphic. Andy Eckardt / NBC News

"What did the Nazis really do here? There are so many unanswered questions," said 67-year-old Walter Boegenhold, a local resident interested in military history who has heard stories about Hitler's secret projects in the region since his teenage years.

The team's initial surface scans produced colorful images of what appears to be bomb-shaped metal housing, which led Lohr and

Boegenhold to partner with explosive ordnance disposal expert Ralf Ehmann, 60.

advertisement

"After conducting geomagnetic scans and carefully looking at all the images, I believe that we have Fat Man bombs buried below the surface," Ehmann told NBC News.

"Fat Man" was the name for the plutonium bomb dropped by U.S. planes on the Japanese city of Nagasaki in 1945. Ehmann believes a similar nuclear bomb was developed by the Nazis.

Local authorities, however, think that's hogwash.

Officials conducted a "broad examination" after "being alerted to a suspected case of nuclear weaponry in the Jonas valley," the city of Arnstadt said in a statement, but they later determined that there was no evidence that "would confirm the suspicion."

Moreover, officials placed a ban on further searches — stating that the area is a designated

nature reserve and that the "departure from regular paths, as well as excavations and drilling are strictly forbidden."

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Other historical sleuths have experienced similar resistance.

A former employee of Germany's BND foreign intelligence service was denied access to the catacombs of a 13th-century Czech castle where he believes a jewel-encrusted "Amber Room" was hidden at the end of WWII.

"At first, local government officials categorically denied that Frydlandt castle has cellars, then they admitted their existence when we confronted them with photos," said Erich Stenz, 69.

advertisement

"This smells of conspiracy," he said.

Stenz and his partner Georg Mederer, 65, were searching based on a tip-off from a former cook at the castle who said she saw Hitler's SS soldiers carrying dozens of unmarked crates into the cellars in February 1945.

The pair, from the southern German state of Bavaria, believe that sheet music could hold the key to finding the priceless Nazi treasure. Like others before them, Stenz and Mederer believe that Hitler's private secretary, Martin Bormann, hid clues about its location in an annotated score of the "March Impromptu" by composer Gottfried Federlein.

Stenz, who led special operations while working for the BND, says he is not a treasure hunter but somebody who wants "to bring the truth to light."

There's also another group of retirees convinced the Amber Room lies in former bunkers underneath the western German city of Wuppertal.

advertisement

Karl-Heinz Kleine, leader of the group, deployed ground-penetrating radar on a recent excursion and detected "anomalies" 40 feet below the surface. His team immediately began digging — again.

"I am convinced that I will find the Amber Room here someday," said Kleine, who has been "on a mission" since 2008 — only pausing his searches when "money is tight."

"The Amber Room is a bit like the Loch Ness monster," historian and filmmaker Guido Knopp told NBC News.

The award-winning journalist, who wrote the book "The Amber Room — On the Trail of a Myth" and produced many historic documentaries for German broadcaster ZDF on the Nazi era, said he had received dozens of clues on the whereabouts of the famous treasure during

his television career.

"[If I'd] started to dig in all those places, I would have needed three lives," Knopp said.

He added that it's not unlikely treasure hunters will find some kind of relics from Nazi times, but he does not believe that the Amber Room will ever be found.

And when it comes to possible nuclear warheads, Knopp said that there "is no clear evidence that the Nazis were able to build a nuclear bomb."

"There are many legends and myths, and those who search, just hope for a bit of glory," Knopp added.

But the nuke hunters of Thuringia have vowed not to give up. They recently presented their findings in a formal letter to the governor of the eastern German state.

Ehmann believes the local authorities conducted their tests in the wrong place and that residents in a three-mile radius of the site could be threatened by a rotting nuclear weapon.

"We are only trying to save the lives of 20,000 people in the region," Ehmann said.

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Device used in Nazi coding machine found for sale on eBay

Damien Gayle and James Meikle

Sunday 29 May 2016 Last modified on Sunday 29 May 2016

theguardian.com

Rare Lorenz teleprinter, part of Hitler's encryption equipment, snapped up by National Museum of Computing



The Lorenz teleprinter purchased by the National Museum of Computing and confirmed as one of the components of the device used to send coded messages between Adolf Hitler and his generals. Photograph: Charles Coultas/AFP/Getty Images

For codebreakers with the allied forces, it was more important a discovery than the Enigma machine, offering encryption for the Nazi command that, when cracked, would hasten the end of the second world war and lead to huge breakthroughs in modern computing.

Less than 80 years later, for a thrifty woman in Essex, the "telegram machine" was little more than a dusty old gadget languishing in the garden shed.

But after an eagle-eyed volunteer with the National Museum of Computing (NMC) spotted an

ad on eBay this week, the extremely rare, military-issue Lorenz teleprinter has been saved and provides the latest piece in international efforts to rebuild Hitler's complete encoding device.

After finding the component on the online auction site, and receiving a long-term loan of the Lorenz SZ42 cipher machine from the Norwegian Armed Forces Museum in Oslo, the NMC is now looking for the final parts to restore the encoder to working order.

"To do that we have to replace some missing components, in particular the drive motor – and it's the drive motor that's our next quest," said John Whetter, a volunteer engineer with the NMC.

Whetter and his colleagues are calling for people across the country to search their sheds and attics for the device, which looks like a small rugby ball with spindles poking out of either end.

It was just such a coincidence that led to the museum getting its hands on their Lorenz teleprinter, after they spotted it for sale. "I think it was described as a telegram machine, but we recognised it as a Lorenz teleprinter," Whetter said.

They rang the seller and drove down to Essex to take a look for themselves. "The person took us down the garden to the shed and in the shed was the Lorenz teleprinter in its original carrying case," Whetter said. They snapped it up for £9.50.

But the true value of their purchase was yet to become clear. It was only after cleaning the machine at Bletchley Park, where the museum is based, that they found it was a genuine

military issue teleprinter, complete with swastika detailing and even a special key for the runic Waffen-SS insignia.

Together with the cipher machine from Norway, the teleprinter almost completes the museum's set of encryption, interception and decryption equipment, which will allow them to tell from beginning to end the tale of how the allies broke Germany's secret codes.

Having heard the story of the teleprinter's discovery on the BBC on Sunday, two former pupils of a school in Finchley, north London, have raised hopes of finding the drive motor. One said he would never forget seeing one on a cabinet in the the headmaster's office while he was being caned.

Another said there had been a Lorenz machine in the head's classroom. The NMC is chasing down the leads.

More complex than the famous Enigma code, the Lorenz cipher could be broken only thanks to the mathematician Bill Tutte, who deduced the architecture of a Lorenz machine without ever having seen one.

Solving the problem also led to the creation of Colossus, the world's first programmable computer, which Tommy Flowers, a Post Office engineer, invented to work out the wheel positions on the Lorenz encryption machine and reduce the time taken to decrypt messages from weeks to hours.

The decoding of the top-secret Lorenz messages is credited with shortening the war and saving countless lives. "It was the highest possible level of security used by the German high command," Whetter said.

It was thanks to the breakthroughs by Tutte and Flowers that allied commanders could be certain Hitler's high command had bought their bluff that the D-Day invasion force would be landing at Calais, rather than on the beaches of Normandy.

The museum is hoping to recreate the encryption and decryption process at a special event on Friday.

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Neanderthals built mysterious cave structures 175,000 years ago

Ian Sample Science editor

Wednesday 25 May 2016 Last modified on Wednesday 25 May 2016

theguardian.com

Neanderthals built mysterious cave structures 175,000 years ago

Constructions discovered deep in a French cave rank among the earliest human building projects ever discovered, but their purpose remains unclear



The ringed walls are made from nearly 400 stalagmites that have been pulled from the ground and stacked on top of one another. Photograph: Michel Soulier/SSAC A look inside the cave and at the techniques being used to date the structures. Source: CNRS News A 3D reconstruction of the structures in the Bruniquel cave. Photograph: Xavier Muth/Get in Situ, Archéotransfert, Archéovision -SHS-3D Parts of the walls show clear signs of fire damage, with the stalagmites blackened or reddened, and fractured from the heat, leading researchers to suspect that the Neanderthals embedded fireplaces in the structures to illuminate the cave. Photograph: Etienne Fabre/SSAC

Mysterious structures found deep inside a French cave are the work of Neanderthal builders who lived in the region more than 100,000 years before modern humans set foot in Europe.

The extraordinary constructions are made from nearly 400 stalagmites that have been yanked from the ground and stacked on top of one another to produce rudimentary walls on the damp cave floor.

The most prominent formations are two ringed walls, built four layers deep in places, which appear to have been propped up with stalagmites wedged in place as vertical stays. The largest of the walls is nearly seven metres across and, where intact, stands up to 40cm high.

"This is completely different to anything we have seen before. I find it very mysterious," said Marie Soressi, an archaeologist at Leiden University, who was not involved in the research. Unique in the history of Neanderthal

achievements, the structures rank among the earliest human building projects ever discovered.

Parts of the walls show clear signs of fire damage, with the stalagmites blackened or reddened and fractured from the heat, leading researchers to suspect that the Neanderthals embedded fireplaces in the structures to illuminate the cave.

Dotted around the construction site are round holes in the ground where the stalagmites were wrenched from the cave floor, demonstrating that builders have not cleared up after themselves since at least the Middle Pleistocene.

Local cavers happened on the mysterious formations in the 1990s, more than 300m from the entrance to the Bruniquel cave, near the Pyrénées mountains in southwest France. Back then, the stalagmite structures were assumed to be 50,000 years old, the same age as burnt animal remains found nearby.



A look inside the cave and at the techniques being used to date the structures. Source: CNRS News A 3D reconstruction of the structures in the Bruniquel cave. Photograph: Xavier Muth/Get in Situ, Archéotransfert, Archéovision -SHS-3D Parts of the walls show clear signs of fire damage, with the stalagmites blackened

But fresh tests on the structures, reported in the journal Nature, reveal the simple walls to be much older than thought. Stalagmite tips and pieces of charred bone found in the walls date them to at least 175,000 years ago. According to French and Belgian scientists who led the research, only Neanderthals could have built the structures. While bears in the cave left behind claw marks, paw prints, tufts of fur, and even hibernation holes, they were not able to stack stalagmites into foot-high walls, the researchers say.

or reddened, and fractured from the heat, leading researchers to suspect that the Neanderthals embedded fireplaces in the structures to illuminate the cave. Photograph: Etienne Fabre/SSAC

Neanderthals lived in Eurasia from about 400,000 to 40,000 years ago and died out just as modern humans arrived in the region. Though often dismissed as thick-browed thugs, our human relatives were immensely

capable, as evidenced by hauls of stone tools and other artefacts they left behind. The Neanderthals harnessed fire, lived in shelters, wore clothes, and mastered the art of stone tool making. Some researchers believe they deliberately buried their dead, and even adorned the graves with offerings such as flowers.

But that is not all. The Iberian Neanderthals had a fondness for sea shells, and turned scallop and cockle shells into jewellery by painting them with mineral pigments and probably threading them on strings. Other Neanderthals made artificial glue by careful burning of tree bark, to help fix their sharp stone tips to spear shafts.



A look inside the cave and at the techniques being used to date the structures. Source: CNRS News A 3D reconstruction of the structures in the Bruniquet cave. Photograph: Xavier Muth/Get in Situ, Archéotransfert, Archéovision -SHS-3D Parts of the walls show clear signs of fire damage, with the stalagmites blackened or reddened, and fractured from the heat, leading researchers to suspect that the Neanderthals embedded fireplaces in the structures to illuminate the cave. Photograph: Etienne Fabre/SSAC

For all the feats Neanderthals achieved, until now, building had never seemed one of their strong points. "Early Neanderthals were the only human population living in Europe during this period," Jacques Jaubert at the University of Bordeaux writes in the journal, suggesting the early human species were even more sophisticated than even expert researchers appreciated.

The site is remarkably well preserved because the stalagmites became encased in calcium carbonate soon after the walls were built. Had they not been constructed so deep inside the cave, however, they would probably have weathered away in the 175,000 years since they were erected.

What the structures were for is far from clear. "At this stage, all options are open," said Soressi. It is not even certain that the walls were made for a specific purpose.

But more intriguing to Soressi is what the Neanderthals were doing so deep inside the cave, where the lack of natural light would have left them in total darkness without fires to illuminate the space. The discovery raises plenty of questions, she adds. Were the walls built when Neanderthals found themselves deep inside the cave by chance, or was making underground structures a common practice for them?

"It's becoming really clear with the Neanderthals, that given their abilities and capacities, there is not so much of a jump between them and contemporaneous modern humans," Soressi said. "But this is very strange behaviour. I'd like to understand why they did it."

comments (324)

- alalos
1h ago

Compiling the best suggestions to the mystery in the comments so you don't have to.

- paleolithic hot tub
- daycare center
- ancient dildo factory
- they were playing Jenga
- a theater

- they wanted to be seen as high brow

• Tzimmes
1h ago

Could have been communal seating around the fires , they were social and may have gathered around the fire much as we do .

• Irwilliston
1h ago

My guess is that it's a Neanderthal day care. The toddlers were penned in a heated area under grannie's watchful eye while the rest went out hunting mastodon.

• anon_y_moose
1h ago

Obviously childcare. Or playgrounds. Why do archaeologists almost invariably claim it's "religious" when they don't know? (yes, I realize that's not the case here. I find that refreshing.)

As for light, there's these things called "torches". Even fat lamps (something soaked in fat and lit) are about 70,000 years old. So light was probably not that much of a problem .

• petermcclure
2h ago

The Guardian 'Comments' section is 'high-brow'?

My goodness! Who would have known?

• Tzimmespetermcclure
1h ago

Makes a change from Israel/ Jew bashing !

• DolleyM
2h ago

It's obvious that the Neanderthals were creating cubicles, so that they could do their various jobs (cutting meat, making sharp stones, etc.) in semi-privacy (but still in a collaborative environment).

• supermac1432DolleyM
1h ago

Thank God they never had to endure open-plan working spaces and hot-desking.

• Tzimmes DolleyM
1h ago

Why obvious !

• icarus32fly
2h ago

That explains the gargoyle architectural style of that much admired pile of ugliness, Notre Dame.

• LaurieMills

2h ago

The fire was probably to keep warm as much as provide light considering it was in the middle of an ice age. It was deep in the cave to keep away from the draughty doorway. Global warming immeasurably improved the lives of following generations. Europeans could do with more of it these days and not have to struggle through sub-zero temperatures every year.

• NotPaidForThis

2h ago

Though often dismissed as thick-browed thugs

But just when was it that this "dismissing" happened? I'm 50, and since I've been in primary school everything, and I do mean everything, I've ever read about Neanderthals had some version of the "oh, they were once thought to be stupid primitive brutes, but that idea has been superseded, they were actually pretty smart" trope in it. That includes things I read that were published before I was even born (I grew up in a house full of reading material). Yet four decades later, it's still being trotted out as an idea that supposedly needs debunking.

• burtblurter NotPaidForThis

1h ago

This can all be explained in the epic French movie "Quest for Fire". Neanderthals were smart and Homo Sapiens girl taught them the "missionary position" as shown in later chapters. In early part the Neanderthal sneaks up from behind to spread his seed. A case of chivalry is shown as the Homo Sapiens girl's sister is being pantry for some scary looking Homo Trump's as he eats her arm. The reward later is "ménage artois" hence we have intelligent Neanderthal genes. That was how Zardoz was developed later.

• letsbeclearaboutthis

2h ago

Temperatures would have been higher deep underground, especially important in winter. This was an ice age.

• Hallatt

2h ago

Maybe the Donald got his skill building walls naturally part of his fine DNA make up.

• TeacherMan Hallatt

1h ago

What a heinous insult. You owe an apology to the neanderthals.

• Hallatt

2h ago

Just look around at Donald Trump, Hilary Clinton and Putin. We still have modern Neanderthals amongst us.

• Paul Moore Hallatt

2h ago

Beat me to it.

• zzzoidberg Hallatt
2h ago

unless you are a native png or australian aborigine, you have neanderthal dna too.

• TheWatchingPlace zzzoidberg
1h ago

Quite right, between about 3 and 7% neanderthal in most of us modern humans. I am starting to think they might have been far more civilised than sapiens were.

• consumerx
3h ago

Early man/Woman did not expend energy for no reason,

This could be anything from a clever rain/water collector, to a shelter where the wood remains have long been burned or rotted away.

These guys put things in graves , weapons, etc, AND buried their dead as we have recently found out.

These early humans were amazing, I am NOT surprised when they are shown to be more intelligent than what has been thought,

by fools who dare to insult them based on looks !!!

• Shatford Shatford
3h ago

Wait, the bible says that man was created just a twat's hair under 6,000 years ago. My mind has been blown!

• howardp Shatford Shatford
46m ago

A view shared by the right wing religious conservatives that dominate the LNP most of whom are climate change deniers or are puppets of the deniers - like Cayman Turnbull.

• 1sarte
3h ago

Neanderthal lives matter.

• bouquet
3h ago

Looks like the work of Banksy to me

• yoghurt2
3h ago

It would be illuminating to carbon date the structures (or any artefacts connected with them since the stalactites would be older) and correlate this with the climatic conditions 175,000 years ago.

• CaroOz
3h ago

This is where Neanderthal women took themselves off to when they got really, really fed up with the behaviour of Neanderthal men. They'd tried building huts above ground, but the blokes thought it was hilarious to burn stuff down after a night's drinking. The things a woman has to do to get a bit of peace and quiet...

• Ignore CaroOz
2h ago

I was gonna post something like this, thought it in poor taste for an article about archeology. Now I am disappointed in myself (mine was going to be along the lines of "Neanderthal elephant grave yard for abused dildos")

• poikloik098 CaroOz
55m ago

Local Neanderthal strip club maybe?

• GrumpyOldDog
3h ago

Absolutely fascinating. Maybe the neanderthals developed skills we will need in 175,000 years, (or maybe even 175 years!), when rampant capitalism has finished destroying our global environment, and forced us all underground!

• awesomejones
3h ago

And Christians think the earth is only 10,000 years old.

• algonquintable awesomejones
2h ago

Only some christians think that and generally they are called creationists. For instance the catholic church came to terms with evolution, to some extent, a long time ago.

• smuglyfrombrazil
3h ago

Octopuses are way more inventive.

• algonquintable smuglyfrombrazil
2h ago

How many octopuses you know made a fire?

• fistink
3h ago

So cool!

• angdavies
3h ago

"It's becoming really clear with the Neanderthals, that given their abilities and capacities, there is not so much of a jump between them and contemporaneous modern humans," Soressi said. "But this is very strange behaviour. I'd like to understand why they did it."

Although these comments were made by an expert who was NOT involved in the research, though was expected to provide elucidating comments off the hoof, they are, however, a bit lame. All the available evidence suggests that, at 170k years ago, there were no significant differences in technology/culture between Neanderthal vs Sapiens. In addition, to describe this formation as "very strange behaviour" seems to encompass pretty much anything us Sapiens did, and still do, that doesn't meet essential Darwinian criteria.

• JWWallac angdavies
2h ago

The impression I got was that she meant strange to mean intriguing, or mysterious.

• NotPaidForThis JWWallac
2h ago

Dr. Soressi is French. The closest French equivalent to 'strange' would be 'étrange', which does indeed mean that. Also unusual, previously unobserved, running contrary to previously held expectations, etc.

• RonMaiden
3h ago

Arseing around in a muddy cess pool propped up by old skeletons is hardly a great indicator of intelligence. Prime Ministers Question time springs to mind.

• JudyKwok RonMaiden
3h ago

I find it offensive to compare Neanderthals to Prime Minister's Question Time. We are learning now that the Neanderthals were intelligent and competent. Can you say the same about the oafs on display at Question Time?

• 3h ago

Maybe they were just really bored. This could have been the result of a neanderthal kid stuck in a cave with nothing better to do .

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Newly discovered mass graves could be filled with an ancient Greek tyrant's followers

By Elahe Izadi
April 15

washingtonpost.com

The Washington Post Newly discovered mass graves could be filled with an ancient Greek tyrant's followers



Remains of men buried in a mass grave, their hands tied with iron chains, were found in an area of the Falirikon Delta near Athens. (Aris Messinis/Greek Culture Ministry via AFP)

Thousands of years ago, an ancient Greek athlete named Cylon tried to overthrow the government. It did not end well.

Now, archaeologists have stumbled upon mass graves near Athens containing the skeletal remains of 80 men who the researchers believe may have been followers of that wannabe tyrant, Cylon of Athens.

The remains — which had teeth in good condition — were found in two graves

that date to between 675 and 650 B.C., Agence France-Presse reported. They rest in an ancient cemetery where the National Library of Greece and the National Opera are being constructed.

The men were lined up in the graves, and the hands of 36 of them were tied with iron shackles, AFP reported.

The finding could illuminate an important chapter in Greek history.

Cylon lived during the 7th century B.C. He came from a noble family in Athens and became somewhat of a star after winning the double footrace at the Olympic Games.

[1,500-year-old skeleton with prosthetic foot found in Austria]

So he wanted to seize upon his celebrity status. With some help from his tyrant father-in-law, he attracted a band of followers to take the Acropolis.

But they were besieged for quite some time. After claiming the protection of the goddess Athena, they relented only after nobles in charge promised to spare their lives.

Cylon and his brother managed to escape, according to Athenian historian Thucydides. The



(Aris Messinis/Greek Culture Ministry via AFP)

band of followers remained with no food. Guards eventually convinced them that they could leave safely but "then led them away and put them to death," Thucydides wrote.

"They even slew some of them in the very presence of the awful Goddesses at whose altars, in passing by, they had sought refuge," according to Thucydides. "The murderers and their descendants are held to be accursed, and offenders against the Goddess."

The episode — dubbed the Cylon Conspiracy, and also described by ancient Greek historian Plutarch — damaged the reputation of the ruling aristocratic family for hundreds of years.

Archaeologists haven't confirmed that the remains belong to men from that band of followers; regional archaeological services director Stella Chryssoulaki described the theory on Thursday, according to AFP.

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Greece's Central Archaeological Council said in a statement that it will further investigate the remains given "the high importance of these discoveries."

Elahe Izadi is a general assignment national reporter for The Washington Post.

Follow @Elahelzadi

48 Comments

Judith Kearney

4/16/2016 12:02 AM PDT

The article does not mention that the new opera house and a new national library are fully funded by the Stavros Niarchos Foundation (www.SNF.org) and the Stavros Niarchos Park. Upon completion, the Greek State will undertake its full control and operation. ...more

Keir Heath

4/15/2016 10:59 PM PDT

Greece is an economic basket-case and it's building an opera house?

ucalegon

4/16/2016 5:52 AM PDT

The main staple of Greece's economy is tourism. Greece already has a lot to offer tourists, but a world-class opera house doesn't seem like an unreasonable investment to draw even more well-heeled visitors.

Prazan

DataAnalyzer

4/15/2016 5:56 PM PDT

I actually appreciate the Washington Post reporting on news that's 2700+ years old. Please do more of it from all around the world. It's news to me, and fascinating.

DataAnalyzerJeroboam and PopFisher

Hector Ortiz

4/15/2016 5:07 PM PDT

Yes. An ornament found on one of the corpses, a form of ancient political iconography, proclaimed "Ενα μέλλον να πιστεύουν σε". Likely the young, white, male, small town followers or a dreadful would-be tyrant who never made it to power.

marentz and Judith Kearney

C.C. Cox

4/16/2016 4:31 AM PDT

They're Greek, stupid. Not "likely" anything. White male? How stupid are you? Greeks are just as European as Spanish and Spanish descendants and anyone else in Europe. Take your bigotry elsewhere.

Robert Karp

4/15/2016 1:31 PM PDT

If the guy failed to get into power then how do they know he was a tyrant? Sounds like the person that was in power was the tyrant if he had them put to death after telling them they were being set free.

Sean Clark

4/15/2016 3:34 PM PDT [Edited]

The ancient definition of tyrant was different from our own, meaning a person who usurped power and often with popular support.

labcoatCPAmaryland refugeePlanet NineJudith Kearney and Teabilly

Hector Ortiz

4/15/2016 5:15 PM PDT [Edited]

A tyrant is anyone who seeks to impose his or her political authority over others by circumventing established rules of political governance for the society. For example, let's say you have a representative republic with an established party system and each party for well over 100 years has selected its nominees for leadership through a particular set of rules. Then along comes some old tool and his band of drugged out lay-about followers who joins one of the parties and then attempt to circumvent its rules to compel his nomination. They try things like insisting he ought to be nominee despite having fewer votes, fewer earned delegates, fewer political subdivision primary victories, less experience, values substantially different than the party's traditional values, etc.

Such a person would be deemed a "tyrant". Looks like the ancient Greeks knew how to handle tyrants and their followers. We can learn so much from the ancients, really.

marentz

skinky_1999

4/15/2016 1:17 PM PDT

So say we all.

sanoran_t

sanoran_t

4/15/2016 6:56 PM PDT

He escaped, got some bionic implants and cloned himself...

ucalegon

4/15/2016 1:17 PM PDT

The Delphic oracle told Cylon to seize the Acropolis during the greatest festival of Zeus. Unfortunately, he misunderstood the oracle's cryptic advice (as did so many others) and chose the wrong festival for his attempted coup.

Judith Kearney1

Thomas Kavanaugh

4/15/2016 1:12 PM PDT

"Tied with iron shackles" No editors at this newspaper? I have experience and am willing to actually edit copy. Note, this comment says "edited".

Free Speaker and Judith Kearney

Rick Raimondi

4/15/2016 12:36 PM PDT

Given the value of Iron back then, I'm surprised they would bury them without removing the shackles. Leaving their wrists bound in death, perhaps signifies something.

Mixasik

4/15/2016 5:05 PM PDT

Maybe they were buried alive?

Doug Chambers

4/15/2016 12:12 PM PDT

Amazing!

Don Ritchie

4/15/2016 12:09 PM PDT

This is truly amazing. I thought Cylon was an Athenian creation myth like Romulus and Remus.

James Collins

4/15/2016 12:05 PM PDT

Entirely likely. However, the article fails to mention that "Tyrant" didn't have quite the same meaning in ancient Greece that it carries 2500 years later. A "tyrant" was simply a ruler, not necessarily despotic.

Pamela Katz and Thomas Kavanaugh

Ihaller

4/15/2016 11:55 AM PDT

Anyone else notice the very modern boot prints amidst the skeletons in the first picture? Not exactly professional archeological behavior.

Mark225 and Thomas Kavanaugh

billposer

4/15/2016 10:50 PM PDT

The article says that this is a construction site. Very likely the remains were first discovered by construction workers who then called in the archaeologists. The boot prints may be those of construction workers.

FineWhine2016

4/15/2016 10:37 AM PDT

Vote for Trump and you will see a lot of this. Just come to the Cleveland convention.
marentzskinky_1999 and mlantry

James Collins

4/15/2016 12:05 PM PDT

Vote for Hillary and we'll have more continuous war...

Antonia74 and Thomas Kavanaugh

Quags

4/15/2016 10:30 AM PDT

"The remains — which had teeth in good condition..."

So we have learned something new. British antecedents did not hail from Greece.

- **washingtonpost.com**
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Newly Orange Seagull Rescued After Falling Into Vat Of Tikka Masala

huffingtonpost.com

Newly Orange Seagull Rescued After Falling Into Vat Of Tikka Masala

"He smelled amazing."

06/09/2016 12:13 pm ET

We've all gone a little overboard in the pursuit of a good meal.

So we can relate to Gullfrazie, the hapless seagull who turned bright orange after falling into a large vat of chicken tikka masala in Wales on Monday.



Vale Wildlife Hospital/Press Association
Gullfrazie, this isn't your color.

Gullfrazie was scavenging meat chunks out of a waste bin near a food factory. The factory hasn't been identified, but workers rescued him and he's now in the care of Vale Wildlife Hospital in Tewkesbury, England, the BBC reports.

He was uninjured, but he would have drowned in the thick liquid if no one had pulled him out, Lucy Kells, a veterinary nurse with the rescue center, told Wales Online. She said the vat was normally

covered, but for some reason the lid was off that day.

The photo of orange Gullfrazie is grabbing many people's attention, but it couldn't capture the strong scent of tikka masala.

"The thing that shocked us most was the smell," Kells told the Independent. "He smelled amazing, he smelled really good."



Vale Wildlife Hospital/Press Association
Gullfrazie, still smelling good after a thorough cleaning.

Kells added that she believes Gullfrazie "has been put off spicy food" after the mishap, but he appears to be doing well.

And while cleaning the orange color out of his feathers was easy, that smell has lingered for several days.

Rescue center staff plans to keep him there until his feathers' natural oils recover, after being somewhat

depleted when they cleaned the sauce off.

Though some humans view seagulls as pests, the birds actually play an important role in the ecosystem. They help keep insect populations under control and consume organic waste, garbage and the decaying bodies of other animals. And while some people think it's kind of gross that seagulls wind up eating out of landfills, humans should probably consider who it was who created those landfills in the first place.

"They didn't create the throwaway society," wrote naturalist Stephen Moss in a Guardian column on seagulls. "We did, and they are simply reaping the benefits by grabbing a free lunch whenever they can."

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UCLA professor asked students to take final exam during lockdown

CBS News June 2, 2016, 8:57 PM

cbsnews.com



Police officers search people at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) campus after it was placed on lockdown following a shooting that left two people dead on June 1, 2016 in Los Angeles, California.

LOS ANGELES -- Amid fears of a shooter on campus, and as hundreds at UCLA were barricading themselves in classrooms, students of one statistics professor were getting emails to find a computer and

take their final exam.



Students at UCLA block the doors amid reports of a shooter on campus Wednesday, June 1, 2016.

CBS News

The professor, Vivian Lew, has drawn criticism for her decision to continue on with the exam in the midst of a massive campus lockdown.

Professor Vivian Lew.

UCLA

ctm0602ucla1072038640x360.jpg



professor.jpg

A campus spokesperson told CBS News on Thursday that Lew did not understand the severity of the situation.

The confusion began around 10 a.m. PT when reports of the shooting were spreading across the campus. At the same time, emails from Lew were sent to her students saying to get to a computer to take the final exam.

CBS News reached out to Lew, but she did not respond to a request for comment. In a statement sent to CBS News Thursday night, statistics department chair Mark S. Handcock said the professor's email was sent on "time-delay" and went out before she was aware of the campus lockdown.

Other reports have quoted Lew admitting in the email she was locked in her office and urged students to avoid the area, but to take the test.

"In the initial moments after yesterday's tragedy occurred, one of our faculty members who had not yet received official word of the campuswide lockdown incorrectly assumed that students just needed to

avoid the area of Engineering Building 4 because of police activity," the statement read. "She sent an email asking her students to take a planned exam anywhere else. Unfortunately, her email was sent on time-delay and it crossed over with a campuswide lockdown alert."

"This was not the intent of the faculty member, who was horrified that this had accidentally occurred," said the statement, which defended her as a professor "extremely dedicated" to her students.

Handcock said Lew made a "full and heartfelt apology to the students in the class for the mistake."

Advised by university text alerts to turn off lights and lock doors where they were, many students let friends and family know they were safe in social media posts. Some described frantic evacuation scenes, while others wrote that their doors weren't locking and posted photos of photocopiers and tables they used as barricades.

Doors open outward with no locks so we had to improvise our own locking mechanism
#uclashooting #engineers pic.twitter.com/GAl1OeCSzK

— Pranasha Shrestha (@pranashalovesu) June 1, 2016

The doors open outward and we can't lock them so we are barricading things in front of the door #Ucla #activeshooter pic.twitter.com/KwA3VjqVHh

— Jason Schechter (@Jasonschechter) June 1, 2016

Mainak Sarkar shot and killed professor Bill Klug, 39, in a UCLA engineering building Wednesday. He then fatally shot himself. The shooting led to a lockdown on the campus with 60,000 or more students and staff members.

The investigation into the murder-suicide took another turn Thursday when police said they suspected Sarkar earlier killed a woman in Minnesota. He then drove to Los Angeles to confront and kill the professor, police said.

Classes at the UCLA campus resumed Thursday for most. Students and faculty in the engineering department will return to school on Monday.

CBSNews.com

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Scientists Say Nuclear Fuel Pools Pose Safety, Health Risks

nbcnews.com

by Patrick Malone and R. Jeffrey Smith

This story was originally published by The Center for Public Integrity, a nonprofit, nonpartisan investigative news organization in Washington, D.C.

Ninety-six aboveground, aquamarine pools around the country that hold the nuclear industry's spent reactor fuel may not be as safe as U.S. regulators and the nuclear industry have publicly asserted, a study released May 20 by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine warned.

Citing a little-noticed study by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, the academies said that if an accident or an act of terrorism at a densely-filled pool caused a leak that drains the water away from the rods, a cataclysmic release of long-lasting radiation could force the extended evacuation of nearly 3.5 million people from territory larger than the state of New Jersey. It could also cause thousands of cancer deaths from excess radiation exposure, and as much as \$700 billion dollars in costs to the national economy.

Until an earthquake and a tsunami pummeled Japan's Fukushima Daiichi power plant in Japan on March 11, 2011, the possibility of such a catastrophe in the more than 30 states where nuclear fuel sits in radioactive pools seemed almost unthinkable. But the academies' new report - their second and final study of that event - says that the operators of U.S. nuclear plants and the commission that regulates them haven't fully grasped all the safety risks and as a result may be exposing the public to unwarranted dangers.



Japan Loads Nuclear Reactor for First Time Since Fukushima

"There were some important issues that were not considered," said Joseph E. Shepherd, a professor of aeronautics and mechanical engineering at the California Institute of Technology who chaired the Academies board that conducted the study. Specifically, he was referring to the NRC's choice not to evaluate the risk of terrorism or insider sabotage as it considered spent-

fuel pool safety.

The report's authors called not only for a new federal estimate of the safety and financial risks of a fuel fire but for a new examination of the relative benefits of withdrawing the spent fuel rods from the pools and storing them instead in dry casks aboveground. That idea has been promoted by some nuclear physicists and engineers for three decades but furiously opposed by the struggling industry because it could cost utilities as much as \$4 billion.

The report, ordered by Congress and entitled *Lessons Learned From the Fukushima Nuclear Accident for Improving Safety and Security of U.S. Nuclear Plants*, starkly contradicts parts of a study by Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff released more than two years after the earthquake off Japan's coast drained power and coolant from three of Fukushima's reactors, causing a meltdown of their radioactive cores.

In its 2014 study, the NRC staff said a major earthquake could reasonably be expected to strike an area where spent fuel is stored in a pool once in 10 million years, maybe even less often, and even then, "spent fuel pools are likely to withstand severe earthquakes without leaking."

The NRC staff study also rated the threat of a terrorist attack that drained one of the pools as unknowable and said as a result that it need not be considered in weighing the costs and benefits of continuing to use the storage pools. "Based on the staff's view that security issues are effectively addressed in the existing regulatory program, they are not part of this analysis," the NRC report said.

But the academies' report, written by 17 distinguished nuclear physicists, engineers, and other scientists, said the industry and the NRC calculations were too narrow. "In fact, a spent fuel pool accident can result in large radioactive material releases, extensive land contamination, and large-scale population dislocations," it said.



Image: Aerial view of TEPCO's tsunami-crippled Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant and its contaminated water storage tanks in Fukushima

An aerial view shows the Tokyo Electric Power Co.'s (TEPCO) tsunami-crippled Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant and its contaminated water storage tanks (top) in Fukushima on Aug. 31, 2013. KYODO via Reuters, file

The report said the industry and the NRC need to strengthen "their capabilities for identifying, evaluating, and managing the risks from terrorist attacks." It said the commission, which regulates the industry, sets safety standards, and enforces compliance, should finally carry out a promise it made a decade ago to organize an independent review of the industry's spent fuel surveillance and security

measures. And it said the commission also needs to conduct a more realistic appraisal than it has so far of the health consequences of a severe nuclear accident.

The NRC staff "did not provide the committee with a technical analysis to support its assertion that security requirements are being effectively addressed in its regulatory program," the Academies report said.

The NRC's immediate response to the report was not exactly a tight embrace. "Even with the recommendations that the academies' board has put together, we continue to conclude that spent fuel is being stored safely and securely in the U.S.," Scott Burnell, a spokesman for the Nuclear Regulatory Commission said. "Nothing in the report causes immediate concern."

Similarly, Steven Kraft, a senior technical advisor at the Nuclear Energy Institute, an industry advocacy organization, said no policy shift was warranted because the risks associated with keeping spent fuel in pools are "teensy." Everyone, he said, "likes to accuse us of being overly worried about money. If something has to be done, we do it. What we look at is: What's the best use of the money? If you're looking at extremely tiny improvements that cost a lot of money, you have to look at if it's the best use of money."

The academies' conclusions were based in part on its view that - even though the Fukushima disaster forced the hasty evacuation of 470,000 people and the ensuing cleanup costs could reach \$93 billion - a more dire economic and health catastrophe was only narrowly averted, largely due to good luck.

In particular, according to the report, one of the spent fuel pools at the reactor site lost a significant

portion of its coolant due to evaporation, when pumps bringing in a regular supply of new coolant lost power. If its highly radioactive rods had been exposed, their heat and exposure to oxygen could have caused a fire, giving radioactive materials and gases from inside and around the rods a way to escape into the environment. The ensuing radioactive contamination might have forced long-term relocation of the population of Tokyo, 177 miles to the south.

Reactor BR2 at the Belgian Nuclear Research Center. SCKCEN

"Just like leaving a tea kettle on the stove," Shepherd said, as the water surrounding the fuel rods boiled off without replenishment and the level steadily dropped.

While the reactor rescue operation was still under way, Japanese scientists prepared an internal report on the possibility of Tokyo's contamination for the Japanese prime minister. But its existence "was initially kept secret because of the frightening nature of the scenarios it described," the Academies' report said. "The content [of the report] was so shocking that we decided to treat it as if it didn't exist," a senior Japanese government official told the Japan Times eight months later.

But the fuel rod pool in question was fortunately located next to another pool containing water that surrounded a reactor core, and by chance a leak developed between them in the earthquake, allowing extra coolant to spill into the most vulnerable fuel rod pool. It kept the rods just below the water's surface.

The reactor's operators had no idea at the time that either the leak or the serendipitous water replenishment was occurring, because the pools in question lacked adequate monitoring systems, the academies' report said. They "had not planned for or been trained to respond to the conditions that existed" in the cooling pools, it said. As a result, they had to improvise, using "helicopters, fire trucks, water cannons, concrete pump trucks, and ad hoc connections" to other water supplies.

That one of the spent fuel pools at Fukushima came so close to releasing massive amounts of radiation should be attention-grabbing, panel chairman Shepherd said. "This was a very significant event and it should serve as a wakeup call for the industry and regulators."

In its own analysis, the NRC has concluded dry-cask storage of spent fuel rods - which is technically feasible after the rods cool for a year or more in the pools -- is only negligibly safer than leaving waste in pools for decades, as is routinely done.

But the academies' study focused on other factors that the NRC chose not to consider, such as the chance that terrorists might strike a spent-fuel pool or an insider might sabotage a pool. The report said predicting human behavior poses challenges, but more effort should have been made to understand the consequences of a deliberate attack.



Ice Wall to Stem Japanese Nuclear Spill

Panel member Frank von Hippel, an emeritus professor and senior research physicist at Princeton University, said that in its "deeply-flawed" cost-benefit analysis, the NRC also excluded consideration of the consequences of property contamination more than 50 miles from a radiation release, even though a broader release is clearly possible. He said the NRC further used outmoded statistical

estimates for the value of a human life, did not incorporate potential tourism losses after an accident, or consider the potential costs to the economy if a major accident forced multiple reactors to be shut down.

In an interview, von Hippel said he felt the commission had bent too easily to the nuclear industry's lobbying against dry cask storage.

"The agency's decision was based on significant and thorough technical analyses which are publicly available," Burnell, the NRC spokesman, responded. But he said the commission's staff will review the report more carefully and deliver a formal report to the commissioners sometime during the second half of the year.

The Center for Public Integrity is a nonprofit, nonpartisan investigative news organization in Washington, D.C.

Patrick Malone
R. Jeffrey Smith

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Octopus snatches diver's camera and takes a cheeky selfie

08:47 EST, 3 June 2016 |

dailymail.co.uk

Daily Mail

.com

MailOnline US - news, sport, celebrity, science and health stories

Are you squidding me? Diver tries to take underwater snap with an octopus – only for the eight-armed creature to snatch the GoPro and snap a selfie instead

- **The diver was swimming in Sydney Harbour when he spotted an octopus**
- **He propped up his GoPro to take a selfie of the eight-armed creature**
- **But the sea animal snatched the device and took a cheeky selfie instead**

By Nelson Groom for Daily Mail Australia

A sticky-fingered octopus has taken a diver's attempt to photograph him into his own tentacles – by snatching the camera and snapping a cheeky selfie instead.

The underwater explorer was swimming in Sydney Harbour when he spotted the eight-armed creature of the deep lurking under a rock on the ocean's floor.

Hoping to seize the Kodak moment, he propped his GoPro camera up near the animal, which immediately turned the tables by picking the device up to take some photos of his own.

Scroll down for video



A diver who spotted an octopus on the ocean's floor got more than he bargained for when he tried to capture a snap of the creature

Hoping perhaps to catch itself in different lighting, the creature began hauling the camera under the rock.

The diver manages to wrestle it out of the octopuses'

clutches, leaving the animal to retreat inside its lair.

It's not the first time the sea animal has staged an impromptu selfie session: earlier this year, a cheeky octopus grabbed a researcher's camera and turned it on the man himself.

Digital media producer Ben Savard was capturing the animal's movements before it took hold of his GoPro camera and turned the photographer into the subject.



The octopus reached out and took hold of his GoPro with a tentacle before snapping a cheeky selfie

The diver manages to wrestle it out of the octopuses' clutches, leaving the animal to retreat inside its lair

The bizarre encounter unfolded in Sydney Harbour when the diver spotted the octopus lurking near a rock

Earlier this year, a cheeky octopus grabbed a researcher's camera and turned it on the man himself.

Comments (1)

StevenMurphy, Sparks, United States, about 10 hours ago

Smartest and coolest creatures of the seas.

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The Rio Olympics organizers are giving out enough condoms for each athlete to have sex 84 times

Written by Mike Murphy @mcwm
May 21, 2016

qz.com

Rio 2016 athletes may have grounds to complain about sewer-infested waters, or half-empty stands. A shortage of contraceptives, however, is not bound to be a problem.

Olympic organizers are distributing 450,000 condoms (link in Portuguese) to athletes, Brazilian newspaper Folha de São Paulo reports. In the interest of equality and variety, 100,000 of those will be female condoms, and 175,000 lubricant sachets will also be available.

That's an Olympic record at the equivalent of 42 condoms per athlete. Presuming the athletes are paired with one another and using only one condom per encounter, that's enough contraception for 84 encounters. During the 2012 London games, organizers handed out a third as many condoms as will be distributed in Rio. And only 100,000 condoms were given out at the 2014 winter games in Sochi.

With Brazil in the midst of an outbreak of Zika, which can be sexually transmitted, safe sex is an even higher priority than in previous Olympics. Rio organizers did not comment to Folha on the enormous condom deployment. The International Olympic Committee merely said the amount should be sufficient.

Since the 1992 games in Barcelona, dispensing free condoms has become a tradition to promote the prevention of AIDS. The supply must come in handy, given the reports of free-wheeling sexual activity at Olympic villages. This year, the Australian team is taking no risks. It's traveling with its own supplies of condoms with anti-viral gel.

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One-armed man tries to burglarize home

May 25, 2016

nwfdailynews.com

nwfdailynews.com
news & information for the emerald coast
Northwest Florida Daily News

• ABRAHAM GALVAN

Follow @@AbrahamGnwfdn

Posted May. 27, 2016 at 7:17 PM

Updated May 27, 2016 at 7:52 PM



Albert Thompson

• SANTA ROSA BEACH —A man with one arm was arrested Wednesday afternoon after he allegedly tried to burglarize the home of a woman who is a Crossfit coach and boxer.

The victim awoke to find Albert Thompson, 28, in her home in Santa Rosa Beach. Thompson tried to steal \$80, but the woman was able to keep him at the scene until deputies arrived, according to the Walton County Sheriff's Office.

The Sheriff's Office said Thompson gave deputies a false name, but he was arrested and charged with burglary of an occupied dwelling, misdemeanor petit theft and obstruction by a disguised person.

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Northwest Florida Daily News | 2 Eglin PKWY NE, Fort Walton Beach, FL 32548

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WEEK IN WEIRD

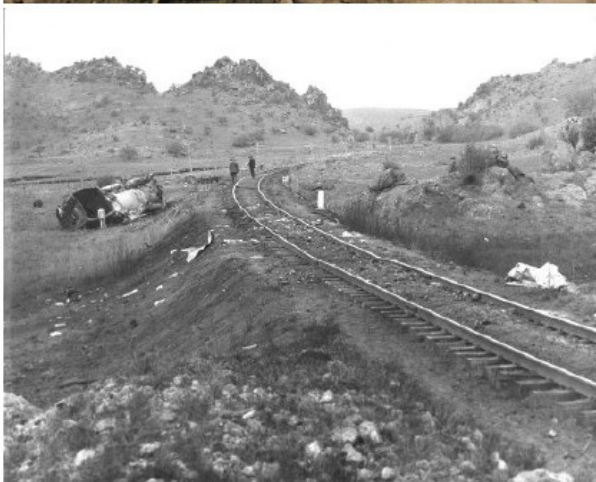
Week In Weird



Home / Strange
Phenomena /
Bizarre Deaths /
Accident or Murder?
The Paisano Pass
Train Mystery



In the early morning hours of July 8, 1921, engineer and businessman William Francis Bohlman was at the throttle of Southern Pacific's Engine No. 745 on his regular run from his home in Sanderson, Texas, to Valentine. In the cab with him was fireman Charles F. Robinson; at the opposite end of the freight train was brakeman Earl Stirman stationed in the caboose. As the train approached Paisano Pass around 5:00AM, the locomotive suddenly came to a halt and a thunderous explosion echoed across the land. William Bohlman lay dead beside the tracks.



Paisano Pass after the accident. The boiler still rests where it fell. The damaged track where the train was sitting is visible near the center. (Terrell County Memorial Museum)

The boiler explosion ripped No. 745 apart. The mangled engine cab flew 200 yards from the tracks, while the 80 metric ton boiler landed upside-down about 30 feet from the wheel chassis, which remained perfectly in place where the train stopped. The force of the blast did, however, cause the tracks to bend under the strain, creating a noticeable dent in the line. Bohlman's lifeless body, found badly burned and gashed with a hole clean through his head, was thrown 60 feet. Robinson was found alive some four miles from the scene, unconscious but without apparent serious injury.

What might seem like a simple accidental boiler explosion—a common form of accident involving steam locomotives—turns out to be a strange tale which leaves more questions than answers. It's not just the fact that No. 745 was a brand new locomotive from the

Algiers Shops operated by Southern Pacific that makes this incident so puzzling. The events leading up to the explosion, as reported by the two surviving men, are equally strange:

"When he recovered consciousness, the fireman said the last he remembered was when he finished sanding the track on the heavy grade near Toronto, a flag station. He had rolled a cigarette and was about to mount the seat when he lost consciousness. [Fireman] Robinson has an ugly gash on the back of his head and is severely bruised as the result of his falling or being hurled from the moving train.

Earl Stirman, the brakeman who witnessed the explosion [from his position standing four cars behind the engine], says he saw a "tall slender man in black" run from the train and make off across the mountain a moment before the explosion occurred... Robinson told the



The remains of No. 745. The tender and cars were unaffected by the blast. (Terrell County Memorial Museum)

coroner both he and the engineer had noticed a man riding a few cars back from the engine. Thinking he was a tramp stealing a ride they paid little attention to the man..."

Whether the hole in Bohlman's skull was caused by a bullet or a piece of shrapnel from the exploding boiler could not be determined with absolute certainty. Shortly before a

hearing was held, Robinson put a bullet in his own head. (At the time, no one was aware that he had suffered trauma to his brain; the swelling and bruising severely effected his mental state, leading to his suicide ten days later.) Stirman was questioned, but found to have no motive to kill his friend and coworker. The mysterious "man in black" was never found or identified, either, but if he did exist and was behind the incident, he had some knowledge of locomotive operation: the injectors which supplied water to the boiler had been cut off, which was what caused the engine to explode.

Paisano Pass is in Presidio County, just 12 miles east of Marfa—home to the mysterious Marfa Lights, with documented sightings dating back as early as 1883 when the town of the same name was first settled. Strangely enough, that first recorded sighting by cowhand Robert Reed Ellison was driving a herd through Paisano Pass when he saw the flickering lights in the sky.

A "tall slender man in black" fleeing a possible murder scene and vanishing without a trace in a place known for strange lights in the sky. Add to this that, according to legend, a fortune in gold bars stolen from Emperor Maximilian and the Mexican treasury (or even the rumored "railroad engineer's gold ore ledge") are said to be hidden in the area, and you have a place teeming with fantastic tales.

It might surprise you to know that the locomotive involved in this horrible tragedy still not only exists but is operational. Officially retired in 1954, the engine was on display in Audubon Park in New Orleans until 1984. Eventually, it fell into the hands of the Louisiana Railway Heritage Trust and was fully restored in 2004. The Louisiana Steam Train Association in Jefferson, Louisiana, currently cares for the aging iron horse and occasionally tours with the engine in Louisiana and Mississippi. Let us hope no other mysterious men in black decide to blow it up again.

Ken Summers

Ken Summers is a historical researcher and purveyor of strange tales and forgotten hauntings. An explorer of haunted sites since 1995 and the apologetic creator of the "orb color chart," he has always endeavored to balance eager curiosity with logical questioning in the pursuit of truth. Ken is reluctant to call himself either a skeptic or a believer, yet throughout his life, he has had strange experiences that fall under the category of "unexplained". His last book, *Queer Hauntings*, was published in 2009.

4 Comments

1. B

07/17/2015 at 7:03 PM



No. 745 as it looks today.



Ken
Summers

I know who did

it, http://xcom.wikia.com/wiki/File:XCOM-EU_Thin_Man.jpg

2. NeverSawBigfoot

08/15/2015 at 4:43 PM

I've been to that part of Texas so many times that I don't know many times I have actually been there. I even saw the Marfa lights, and other weird things like an alligator

in the Rio Grand near Terlingua (I have a clear photograph). It's so desolate, beautiful and sublime that anything seems possible. Exquisite entropy. If you're up for a road trip, I'll show you some unforgettable things....

• Ken Summers

08/17/2015 at 10:28 PM

I have a list of thing in Texas I need to see. It's been years since I've visited, and back then all I remember is the statue of Sam Houston rising out of the forest near some very-rough highway that felt like a post-apocalyptic world. Marfa, Austin, and several other strange places are all still on my radar. I definitely need to get down there again!

• Aramaic

08/18/2015 at 11:30 AM

Can you put a link please

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Paraglider captures terrifying moment his chute is attacked by an eagle

15:24, 6 Jun 2016 Updated 15:25, 6 Jun 2016 By Dave Rogers

mirror.co.uk



Eagle attacks paraglider in the sky

A terrified paraglider filmed himself screaming at an eagle as it swooped in to attack his chute and tore two huge holes in the fabric.

Turkish thrill-seeker Ozgur Cicek had been paragliding over the village of Bademagaci, in the north of Turkey's Antalya Province, near the Mediterranean coast, when the eagle targeted the paraglider in attack mode.

Footage of the incident was caught on Ozgur's helmet-mounted camera and first starts with the paraglider enjoying the beautiful, mountainous scenery.

But the relaxed sightseeing soon turned into a panicked race to land, when he noticed an eagle flying down, getting dangerously close to his parachute.

The terrified paraglider can be heard shouting at the bird in a bid to scare it away.

But it did just the opposite as it swooped by and clawed at the chute, trying to tear it apart.



CEN

Ozgur spots the eagle approaching
The bird attacks the chute
Ozgur was left shaken and counting his blessings

The paraglider kept screaming but the bird of prey kept coming back, plunging down dangerously close and taking swipes at the nylon with its talons.

The eagle attacked him several times from high above for over a minute, before Ozgur eventually managed to land safely in a field.

As he touched the ground, Ozgur sighed in relief: "Now I'm a paraglider who's survived an eagle attack!"



CEN

And he then discovered that he was right to have screamed at the eagle because he later inspected his parachute and discovered it had torn several holes in the nylon.

After the ordeal, Ozgur decided to post the video online to share his experience.

Commenting on a video-sharing website, Ozgur said: "He pierced a hole in the parachute in two different places!"

Comments

2 days ago

Carthanachta

Excuse me but, YOU were in his domain.

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CEN

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Could parrot be witness in Michigan murder case?

GRAND RAPIDS, Michigan (WABC) –

abc7ny.com



none

Friday,
June 03,
2016
12:45PM

A murder case in Michigan has taken a bizarre and disturbing twist after

the victim's parrot, Bud, was recorded repeating words that the man's family believes it heard just before their son was shot dead.

Martin Duram, 45, was shot and killed in his home on in Sand Lake in May 2015. His wife was also shot but survived, and she is now a suspect.

"That bird picks up everything and anything," the victim's mother, Lillian Duram, said. "And it's got the filthiest mouth around."

The bird, they say, mimicked both Martin Durham and his wife, Glenna, in video recorded several weeks after the shooting.

It starts what sounds like an argument, with the bird changing voices. Eventually, Bud says, "Don't (expletive) shoot."

"Then, all of a sudden, this came out of the bird's mouth," dad Charles Duram said. "I personally think he was there and he remembers it, and he was saying it."

Police reports show that a witness asked police whether they could use the bird as evidence, but they don't show that the detective responded.

Newaygo County prosecutor Robert Springstead says he's aware the couple had a bird that talked but said he had not seen the video.

Doreen Plotkowski, the owner of Casa la Parrot in Grand Rapids, weighed in.

"It's definitely an argument between a man and a woman," she said, adding that it's

not unusual for African grey parrots to mimic male and female voices. "In my mind, it's something that he's heard, definitely heard before."

State police identified the wife as a suspect in a murder-attempted suicide, suggesting she shot him five times before turning the gun on herself. They say she left three suicide notes. and that the gun belonged to the family.

But in an interview with police after she recovered, she denied killing him, saying she remembered nothing until she was in the hospital.

The prosecutor said he plans to make a decision on charges in two to three weeks.

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<http://www.worldwideweirdnews.com/2016/05/22-Pastor-invites-people-to-eat-fried-human-flesh.html>

Pastor invites people to eat fried human flesh



GbamTV @GbamTVFan · May 20
WINNERS CHAPEL, PASTOR ADENIYI JOHNSON & THE ALLEGED
HUMAN MEAT goo.gl/TY8z2y @GbamTVGlobal

Adeniyi Johnson offering fried human flesh

By: Mahesh Sarin

A pastor was arrested after allegedly inviting people to eat fried meat, which turned out to be human flesh, according to police in Nigeria.

Ondo police said that they have arrested Adeniyi Johnson, who is a pastor at the Winners Chapel church, after he was caught eating fried human flesh.

The pastor was detained after he invited people to join him for a meal. Johnson then placed fried meat on a tray and told the crowd to eat.

However, some residents warned that the food appears to be human flesh.

Johnson was arrested, and he told police that God instructed to him to share human flesh with people in order to save his dying son.

He begged police to let him go in order to be able to continue God's mission. Officials of the Winners Chapel church said that the pastor had been fired last month, after he showed signs of mental illness.

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Man indicted after thrift shop finds rape photos in tote bag | Fox News

COLUMBUS, Ohio –

foxnews.com

<http://www.foxnews.com/us/2016/06/07/man-indicted-after-thrift-shop-finds-rape-photos-in-tote-bag.html>

Published June 07, 2016

Associated Press

Prosecutors say the discovery of nude photos of a 1-year-old child and pieces of a man's mail in a tote bag donated to an Ohio thrift store has led to the man being indicted on rape and other charges.

The Franklin County prosecutor says sexual activity was depicted in a Polaroid picture found by Salvation Army employees in Columbus.

Police say they identified Gary Sovie because the bag contained his mail. They say he told them he's a "sick person."

The 48-year-old Sovie also was indicted on charges of pandering sexually oriented matter involving a minor and illegally using a minor in nudity-oriented material. Authorities allege the abuse occurred in 1999 at his Grove City home.

Sovie is in custody and has no attorney to comment for him. He hid his face in court Tuesday. His arraignment is Wednesday.

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Man laments slow pace while walking legless pet

upi.com

By Ben Hooper | June 1, 2016 at 2:41 PM

Follow @oddnewsupi



This pet snake will never be famous for its speed. Screenshot: Storyful

WASHINGTON, June 1 (UPI) -- A U.S. man who took his pet for an excruciatingly slow walk shared the reason for his animal companion's slowness: it has no legs.

Michael Johnson posted a video to YouTube titled "Pet Walk" that shows his attempt to take his pet for a walk using a retractable leash.

"I hate taking you for a walk, you're always so slow," Johnson says.

He then pans the camera to show the "lazy" pet -- a snake.

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Home

Peter Sutcliffe: The Yorkshire Ripper



Women feared for their lives until a routine police stop ended his reign of terror.

“In this truck is a man whose latent genius, if unleashed, would rock the nation, whose dynamic energy would overpower those

around him. Better let him sleep?”

Sutcliffe's handwritten sign placed on the windscreen of his lorry

On 2 June 1946, in Bingley, Yorkshire, John and Kathleen had their first child, Peter William Sutcliffe. Peter was later joined by another five siblings.

“Growing up with Peter...he was a really nice guy. He being so much older than me, he was more like a father figure as my dad was never around. He was either working or out at the pub or doing sports events. And Pete used to teach me things that a father should really, so he was a great big brother.”

Carl Sutcliffe

Their father John was very jealous and constantly accused Kathleen of sleeping around. Hypocritically, it was in fact John who was having the affairs. John was a big, burly, sporty and sociable man. His eldest Peter was small, shy and introverted. Peter stayed close to his mother.

Peter hated school. He found it hard to make friends and was often bullied. Once, unable to take anymore, he hid from school for a fortnight. When his parents and school realised the reason, they stopped the bullying.

As a teenager, Peter bulked up through bodybuilding. He dropped out of school aged just fifteen. Some of his first jobs were unusual.

“While not specifically conducive to their criminal pursuits, some jobs held by serial killers are consistent with their morbid psychologies. Peter Sutcliffe...for example, found employment in a mortuary.”

Harold Schechter The Serial Killer Files

Schechter adds Sutcliffe ‘enjoyed toying with the corpses-arranging them in grotesque poses and using them as ventriloquist dummies.’

Another job Peter did was grave digging. He liked to play ‘morbid pranks’ with the skeletons and was seen stealing the jewellery of the dead. In his spare time, Peter visited a waxwork museum. His favourite section displayed the ‘devastating symptoms of advanced venereal disease.’

Aged 20, Peter was still a virgin. In 1966 he met Sonia Szurma, the daughter of Czech immigrants. In

When they do, middle England erupts. Feminist marches demand curfews for men. Panic and paranoia spreads and thousands of anonymous letters are sent to the police naming hundreds and hundreds of suspects.

Sutcliffe's cruising partner, Trevor Birdsall informs on him. He recounts a night in 1969 when Sutcliffe had returned from a prostitute saying he'd tried to kill her with a brick in a sock. Only the tearing of the sock had saved her.

The constable he tells it to files the report. It is just yet more paperwork being fed into the system.

The investigation is now out of control. Oldfield is replaced by Jim Hobson. He tells police not to discount suspects based on their accent.

Finally, Sutcliffe is caught by simple, solid policing.

OLIVIA REIVERS

Olivia, out of all the women Sutcliffe encounters, can be counted as lucky. When police see her in a car with another man, they pull up.

Arrest

It's Friday 2 January 1981. Sergeant Robert Ring is on routine patrol with a colleague. He sees a woman in a car with a man and suspects a prostitute and client encounter. Olivia tells Sergeant Ring that the man in her car is her boyfriend. Ring thinks he remembers her for prostitution offences. Sutcliffe says his name is Peter Williams. He adds he's desperate for the toilet. Ring allows him to go behind a storage tank.

The police find the car's license plates are false. And Peter admits so is the name he has given. He says he's really Peter Sutcliffe. He's detained overnight. Police notice Sutcliffe's physical similarity to the Ripper profile. His blood test shows he's blood group B, one of few the indisputable forensic details and relatively rare in the general population.

Sergeant Ring returns to the scene of his arrest. Sutcliffe hadn't emptied his bladder. He'd emptied his pockets of a ball-peen hammer and a knife.

Assistant Chief Constable George Oldfield, though not officially on the case, is invited to witness the unfolding events.

On Sunday 4 January, Sutcliffe confesses. The Yorkshire Ripper calmly gives a 15 hour statement recounting his crimes. He claims that back when he was a 20-year-old gravedigger, the voice of God had commanded he kill prostitutes

Finally, after confessing all, he requests to be allowed to inform his wife of his actions.

The following exchange occurred between them at Dewsbury police station.

Sonia: "What on earth is going on, Peter?"

Sutcliffe: "It's me, I'm the Yorkshire Ripper. I killed all those women."

Sonia: "What on earth did you do that for Peter?"

The police press conference is called at 9pm. The euphoria of the police is barely disguised.

Only the press questions on whether the killer has a Geordie accent dampens their elation.

Trial

On Monday 5 January 1981, Sutcliffe appears at Dewsbury Magistrates Court.

After explaining his prostitute killing as following God given orders, police are satisfied that Sutcliffe was suffering from paranoid schizophrenia and should be incarcerated in a secure mental institution.

A judge decides, however, that Sutcliffe will face trial. He wants to give a jury the right to decide whether Sutcliffe is insane.

His brother Carl visits him in jail and like Sonia, just wants to know why his brother has caused so much pain and suffering. Peter Sutcliffe's replies;

"Oh, just cleaning up our kid, just cleaning up."

MAD OR BAD

Four months after confessing, Sutcliffe's trial commences on 29 April 1981. It lasts a fortnight. His detailed confession and plea of insanity mean the jury are instructed to determine his mental state, rather than his guilt or innocence.

Throughout it all, Sutcliffe shows no emotion.

"He came up from the cells in the morning, took his seat in the dock just as though he were arriving in the office for work."

Henry Matthews, Former Journalist

On 22 May 1981, after six hours of deliberation, the jury give a majority verdict of 10-2 finding him sane. They find Sutcliffe guilty of thirteen counts of murder and the attempted murder of seven others.

The judge sentences Sutcliffe to life for each murder and recommends a minimum tariff of thirty years.

Aftermath

Following Sutcliffe's sentence Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary, Lawrence Byford, was charged with investigating the conduct of West Yorkshire Police during the Ripper Inquiry. His report was a devastating indictment.

It transformed police investigations and resulted in the setting up of HOLMES, the first major inquiry computer programme.

Jailed in 1981 Sutcliffe was initially sent to HMP Parkhurst on the Isle of Wight. He was attacked by another inmate. It will not be the last time this happens.

Prison psychiatrists diagnose Sutcliffe as insane. He was transferred to Broadmoor secure hospital in 1984.

He was visited there by West Yorkshire's Chief Constable, Keith Hellawell. He asked about many other cases, including that of Tracy Browne.

Eleven years after being jailed Sutcliffe confessed to attacking two others, one of whom was Tracy Browne.

RIPPER RIPPED

In 1997, Sutcliffe was stabbed in both eyes with a pen by another Broadmoor patient, Ian Kay. Emergency surgery saved the sight in the right one. He was left blinded in the left.

Despite his lack of popularity amongst fellow inmates, Sutcliffe reportedly receives considerable fan mail from female admirers.

Sonia, his wife, however, remarried and changed her surname.

JACK JAILED

On 20 October 2005, 'Wearside Jack' finally faced justice. A former security guard, John Humble, was arrested and charged with perverting the course of justice. He had sent two letters and a tape recording

that led to the hunt for the Ripper hoaxer, "Wearside Jack". More sophisticated DNA profiling enabled experts to match his DNA from a motoring offence to saliva taken from one of the envelopes containing the hoax letter sent in 1978.

In March 2006, Humble was jailed for eight years at Leeds Crown Court.

The tape recording was in fact done in a red brick council semi by the 23-year-old labourer as a prank. When they took his tapes seriously John Humble twice tried to convince detectives that it was a hoax. But the more he pleaded, the more convinced they were that the tapes were genuine.

IPSWICH MURDERS

The changes in public sympathy for the plight of prostitutes and of police treatment of them were evident over the 2006 serial murders of five women. The fact that they were prostitutes was pertinent, but it didn't mean the police were under any less pressure to find their man. And within two months, they did.

Such advances in public and policing sensitivity are probably little consolation to the many, many victims of Peter Sutcliffe:

"I don't have mam to see every time I want to see her...I wish she was here. Always have done."

Neil Jackson, Son of Emily Jackson (the Ripper's second murder victim)

FROM ANNA TO JACQUELINE

In 2008, after thirty three years of living in fear, Anna Rogulski, Sutcliffe's first surviving victim, finally found peace and died in hospital.

His second surviving victim was reduced to a shadow of her former self. Her daughter had a nervous breakdown.

His youngest victim, Tracy Browne, without counselling, rebuilt her life and refuses to let Sutcliffe affect her future. It seems her youth helped her.

"I was still growing up when the attack happened. I was young, resilient and with a teenage-type determination to put it all behind me...I am now a survivor, not a victim."

The father of one of Sutcliffe's last murder victims, Jayne MacDonald was not so able to put things behind him. Two years after her death, it is said he died of a broken heart.

Sutcliffe set out to 'clean' the streets of prostitutes. Instead, he destroyed the lives of students, civil servants, housewives and mothers. And on top of that, he created an impact in many families from which they would never recover. The family of his last victim, Jacqueline Hill tried to sue the police over their incompetent investigation of the Ripper attacks and killings.

Their court case was unsuccessful.

The Courts did, however, reject a 2010 appeal by Sutcliffe against his whole life tariff. They confirmed that Sutcliffe would serve a whole life tariff and never be released from imprisonment.

Also that year, the murder of Joan Harrison was conclusively linked to another man. Forensics from her case had helped convince Oldfield of the authenticity of the 'Wearside Jack' letters and tapes.

In November 2012 it was reported that the 66-year-old Sutcliffe believed he would soon be on day release. He was also said to have defended the paedophile Jimmy Savile and boasted of the number of visitors and pen pals he had.

His reading of their letters is more difficult because of being stabbed and blinded in his left eye.

It is also claimed that Sutcliffe is now a Jehovah's Witness.

Some bizarre urban myths have sprung up about the serial killer. Leeds University students have been known to tell a story based on the fact that he liked to eat at the Kentucky Fried Chicken in Headingley. They say the Ripper was arrested there when staff recognised him from the photo fit issued by the police. They told Sutcliffe that he was their millionth customer and must stay while they presented him

with his prize. Instead, they rang the police who arrested him.
Like all such myths, the grain of truth in it helps it to persist.

In July 2013, John Humble, the man behind the 'Wearside Jack' tapes spoke publicly for the first time. He said it started "as a prank – just a bit of fun."
It was revealed that the hoax had lead to him trying to take his own life three times.

Timeline

Born

2 June 1946

The Victims

30 October 1975: Wilma McCann, 28, Leeds
20 January 1976: Emily Jackson, 42, Leeds
5 February 1977: Irene Richardson, 28, Leeds
23 April 1977: Patricia Atkinson, 32, Bradford
26 June 1977: Jayne MacDonald, 16, Leeds
1 October 1977: Jean Jordan, 20, Manchester
21 January 1978: Yvonne Pearson, 21, Bradford
31 January 1978: Helen Rytka, 18, Huddersfield
16 May 1978: Vera Millward, 40, Manchester
4 April 1979: Josephine Whitaker, 19, Halifax
2 September 1979: Barbara Leach, 20, Bradford
20 August 1980: Marguerite Walls, 47, Leeds
17 November 1980: Jacqueline Hill, 20, Leeds

Arrested

2 January 1981

Trial

5 May 1981

Convicted

22 May 1981

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August 1974, he married Sonia, the only woman he'd ever dated.
Due to his erratic employment, the newlyweds were financially forced to move in with Sonia's parents.
Unknown to them, Peter was spending his spare money on prostitutes.
Together with a friend, Trevor Birdsall, he'd cruise Yorkshire's red-light areas.

In June 1975, he got his HGV licence. His lorry-driving job allowed him to come and go when he pleased.

WHAT TRIGGERED THE RIPPER?

One theory is that a bad experience with a prostitute led to Sutcliffe's violent hatred of sex-workers.

Another is that in trying to reconcile the loving mother he had idealised with the slutish adulteress his father had portrayed her as, Peter followed the same sexist stereotyping evidenced in many male dominated cultures:

Each woman was either a pure Virgin Mother worthy of a sacred love;
or they were a sinful whore.

And if they were the latter, they were less than a human and killing would be more the eradication of an infestation than of murder. As he later stated;

"I were just cleaning the streets."

Over the next savage five years, Peter Sutcliffe would murder thirteen women and viciously attack seven others.

During this period, he was a devoted husband and seemingly ordinary guy.

"How can you do that and then come and have Sunday dinner with your mum, and smile and laugh and just act like nothing's happened?"

Carl Sutcliffe, Peter's brother

Another theory is that Sutcliffe was reacting to Sonia's many miscarriages.
Peter desperately wanted to be a father.
Then in 1975, 29-year-old Peter was told that his Sonia would never have children.

It's noteworthy that Peter often mutilated the stomach and torso area of his victims. Was he unconsciously acting out the belief that if his wife couldn't have children, nor should others?
Soon after being told he would never be a father, Peter made his first attack.

Three quarters of a century after Jack the Ripper, Peter Sutcliffe took up his vengeful attacks on prostitutes.

He would go on to kill more than twice as many victims as his Victorian forerunner.

Crimes

"...there isn't a lot of torture in these cases and in the main they are relatively quick, what we call blitz attacks, extremely violent and extremely sudden blitz attacks, without actually an awful lot of sexual behaviour accompanied in them."

Professor Laurence Alison, Forensic Psychologist

ANNA

Sutcliffe's first known attack occurs in the early hours of 4 July 1975 in Keighly. Anna Patricia Rogulskyj is a good-looking divorcee. After an argument with her boyfriend, she has come back to his house. It's around 1:30 in the morning. But as she bangs on his door, it becomes obvious he's not in.

As she considers her options, Sutcliffe sneaks up behind Anna. He employs what will become his signature. He first disables her by beating her round the head with a ball-peen hammer. Once she's stunned to the ground, he lifts up her skirt and goes to work on her with a knife. She is mercifully unconscious as he slashes and mutilates her genitalia and stomach.

Then Anna's neighbour disturbs him. The dark covers the scene and Sutcliffe manages to reassure the man that all is well. As soon as he leaves, Sutcliffe slinks away.

A passerby sees her. She's rushed to casualty. Doctors work on her for twelve hours. She's read the last rites.

But Anna survives.

Six other women would survive Sutcliffe's attacks. Some would be told they were lucky to be alive. Left physically and emotionally scarred and forever changed, not all would agree.

Anna spends the next 33 years alone, behind a barricade of bars, wires and alarms.

After the Anna attack, Sutcliffe returned to his sleeping wife and awoke the next day ready to look for work.

OLIVE

Over a month later, on Friday 15 August, Sutcliffe drives his friend Birdsall to Halifax for a few drinks. His eyes lock onto 46-year-old Olive Smelt. The married mother of two is out with her girlfriends for her regular Friday night drinks. Her husband is home doing the childminding.

She goes home before midnight. Sutcliffe follows with Birdsall in the car. He leaves his friend and intercepts her in an alleyway. Before smashing her with a hammer he says,

"Weather's letting us down isn't it?"

Stunned and grounded, he then slashes at her backside with his knife. But an approaching car prevents him finishing. He returns to Birdsall.

Olive never returns to normal.

In September Peter starts regular work as a delivery driver.

TRACY

His third attack is also in August. She will be his youngest victim.

On a warm summer's evening, 27 August 1975, 14-year-old, Tracy Browne is walking to her home in Silsden village. An unassuming Sutcliffe walks past her. He dawdles until she catches him up. Pretending to be a local, he walks by her side for over 30 minutes. Then, just before her home, he pulls out his hammer.

She remembers him grunting from the force of the blows.

"To this day, I can hear those ugly grunts. But amazingly, I never lost consciousness throughout it all."

The headlights of an approaching car disturb him and save Tracy.

So, so far the harlot hating Sutcliffe has managed to attack a divorcee, a married mother of two and a schoolgirl.

WILMA

On the evening of 29 October Wilomena McCann, or Wilma to her friends, a 28-year-old Scottish mother of four, is drinking heavily. After closing time, she tries to hitch home.

Sutcliffe picks her up.

He dumps her sexually assaulted and mutilated body close to her home.

At 5am, two of her daughters are found sitting nearby at a bus stop. They're waiting for their mum.

EMILY

During the 1970s, the British economy reels from global shocks.

Many families struggle.

Emily Jackson and her husband, Sydney, are close to losing their family home. They've agreed she needs to prostitute herself. They're desperate that their three children don't realise how much trouble their roofing business is in.

Emily now uses the company van to service clients in the streets and car parks of Leeds.

But on Tuesday night, 20 January 1976, she gets into the Sutcliffe's car.

Sutcliffe stabs her over 50 times with a screwdriver. Once she's dead, still enraged, he stamps on her leg.

Sutcliffe's attacks start to wear him out. He finds it hard to wake up for work. And on 5 March 1976, he's fired from his delivery job.

MARCELLA

It's 4am on the morning of 9 May 1976. A prostitute, 20-year-old Marcella Claxton, walks home from a party in Chapeltown. Sutcliffe picks her up and takes her to a field. As she urinates, he hammers her head twice. She's conscious as he stands over her bleeding body masturbating. Finished, he places a £5 note in her hand and warns her not to call the police.

She calls an ambulance.

She has 52 stitches. Her wounds heal but she never recovers.

That October, Sutcliffe secures regular lorry driving work.

IRENE

Irene Richardson is a 28-year-old prostitute. Like most in her profession, she knows someone is preying on them. But also like most in her profession, she has no choice. She's close to homeless and so broke that her two children are with foster parents.

Sutcliffe smashes her skull so severely it penetrates her brain.

His savage stabbing disembowels her.

He covers her body with her coat.

After Irene's death, the press nickname the killer, 'The Yorkshire Ripper'. But a prostitute killer isn't considered of general public interest. Media attention soon moves on.

TINA

Patricia Atkinson likes to be called Tina and likes to drink. The divorced mother of three is a prostitute who only works from her flat. As all the attacks have taken place outside, she feels safe as she lets Sutcliffe in.

He hammers the back of her head. This time, he can't be disturbed. This time, he uses a chisel. He stabs her six times.

JAYNE

On 26 April, 16-year-old shop assistant, Jayne MacDonald, having missed her bus and having failed to find a taxi, is walking home past a playground.

Sutcliffe delivers three quick blows to her head. He drags her onto waste ground. He then repeatedly stabs her to death.

"Prior to that point, the fear, if you like, had been exclusively felt by working prostitutes. But from Jayne McDonald on there was this feeling that no woman was safe."

Henry Matthews, Former Journalist

"My own sisters used to walk around with knives in their bag, in their handbags although they were probably the safest people on the planet from the Yorkshire Ripper. But they had no idea that it was our brother Peter."

Carl Sutcliffe

MAUREEN

The public panic has little effect on Sutcliffe. In the early hours of 10 July, it's only a barking dog that interrupts Sutcliffe and stops him from ending the life of Maureen Long.

JEAN

On 1 October, Sutcliffe makes a serious error. He pays Jean Jordan with a brand new £5 note from his pay packet. After killing her, he hides her body. Only later does he realise how incriminating the new bank note could be. He waits a week and after driving guests home from a housewarming party, he returns to the body.

Her handbag is missing. Furious and frustrated, he slashes at her decomposing body, creating 8-inch deep post mortem wounds.

“...to try and persuade the police that this was not a Ripper killing; he tried to cut off Jean Jordan's head.”

Henry Matthews, Former Journalist

But his hacksaw can't cut through and he leaves, now frightened as well as frustrated.

MARILYN

On 14 December he agrees a price with Marilyn Moore. But his first hammer blow doesn't stun her and her screams set off a dog barking.

Patched up at hospital, but still penniless and despite having a hole in her head from the 'Ripper', she soon returns to prostitution.

YVONNE

Sutcliffe kills Yvonne Pearson on 21 January 1978. Her body lies undiscovered until March.

Ten days later, he hammers 18-year-old Helen Rytka to the ground. He has sex with her as she bleeds. He then stabs her through her lungs and heart.

Her twin sister is also a prostitute. She fears the police and doesn't report Helen missing for another two days.

VERA

After a ten-week lull, Sutcliffe meets 41-year-old Vera Millward, a Spanish born mother of seven. Vera's in pain after an operation and has popped out for painkillers. Sutcliffe slashes her stomach so severely that she is disembowelled.

Her screams are heard by a father and son visiting the hospital. They ignore them.

The 11 following months of inactivity are because of Sutcliffe's mother's declining health. She dies from heart disease on 8 November 1978.

JOSEPHINE

On Wednesday 4 April 1979, Sutcliffe ends his grieving period. Bank clerk Josephine Walker is returning at midnight from visiting her grandparents. He hammers her twice, and then stabs her 25 times.

BARBARA

On 1 September 1979, Bradford student Barbara Leach dies instantly from the first hammer blow. He dumps her stabbed body under a carpet.

Police interview Sutcliffe so many times that work mates nickname him 'The Ripper'.

They are shocked and in disbelief when their colleague, who they always thought of as being a loving husband tells them he's having an affair.

Sutcliffe admits he's been leading a double life with a lady in Glasgow.

In April 1980, Sutcliffe is arrested.

But it is for drinking and driving.

His public affair threatens his marriage and his drink driving threatens his livelihood. Things are starting to unravel for Sutcliffe.

MARGUERITE

Civil servant, Marguerite Walls, is working late on the evening of 20 August 1980. She walks home along well-lit streets. She screams as Sutcliffe hammers her. Having forgotten his knife, he's forced to strangle her.

UPADHYA

His next two victims survive. His first is in September and is on a visiting Singaporean doctor, Upadhya Bandara

THERESA

Unlike Tracy Browne, however, 16-year-old Theresa Sykes doesn't find her youth a defence or time a healer. She and her family are never the same again after her November attack.

JACQUELINE

On a wet Monday, 17 November, Leeds student Jacqueline Hill passes Sutcliffe eating in Kentucky Fried Chicken. He had sat there when Upadhya Bandara passed by. He left and followed Jacqueline. She is very nearly home when he attacks.

He drags her behind some bushes and stabs and stabs. Even her eye is mutilated.

OLIVIA REIVERS

On Friday 2 January 1981 Sutcliffe picks up mother of two Olivia Reivers. By this stage, he's incapable of being aroused without having first attacked the woman.

This time, he will not get the chance.

Investigation

"I think the temptation is to look at some of these guys as something particularly horrific or something particularly unusual but the reality is quite often they're from a long line of particularly uninteresting, inadequate people...the reality is if they were more bizarre or strange then they would stand out and would have come to the attention of the authorities a lot earlier."

Laurence Alison, Forensic Psychologist

ANNA

The police investigation into the attack on Anna Rogulskyj soon winds down. With no money or rape, the motive is unclear. With all the usual suspects such as the boyfriend cleared, the only lead was the neighbour's vague description of a five foot eight man in his late twenties. The only distinct detail is that the attacker wore a check sports jacket.

OLIVE

When Olive Smelt is attacked, the same process repeats itself. It will take three years for the police to identify Olive's attacker as the Ripper.

TRACY

As Tracy Browne walked with Sutcliffe for over 30 minutes, she's able to give a very accurate description to the police.

"I even mentioned the gap between his teeth and his insipid voice – a little man with a high-pitched voice."

The ID picture appears in the papers. It's such a good likeness that Sutcliffe jokes to his mother-in-law about the resemblance. The police never connect this attack with those of the Yorkshire Ripper.

WILMA

The Wilma McCann murder inquiry is headed by Detective Chief Superintendent Dennis Hoban. His pathologist tells him that Wilma was struck twice on the back of the head. She was then stabbed on her front 15 times. Traces of semen are found. It's the first forensic evidence. As Wilma had been seen trying to hitch lifts from lorry drivers, 6,000 are interviewed. A further 7,000 are processed, including householders along her route home, associates, friends and family. It amounts to nothing.

'murder by person or persons unknown.'

The coroner verdict of Wilma McCann.

EMILY

At 8am on 21 January 1976, Emily Jackson's mutilated body is found. On top of her stab wounds, there is an imprint of a Wellington boot on her leg. Checks reveal it's a size 7 Dunlop Warwick Wellington boot. Because she was so mutilated, Detective Chief Superintendent Hoban connects Wilma's murder with Emily's.

MARCELLA

Marcella Claxton, like Wilma McCann was hit over the head with a hammer. She is also able to give Hoban some key details about her attacker namely that he is bearded. But she is a prostitute and she is black. In 1976, that means there is little sympathy from the public and scant political pressure on the police to track down her assailant.

IRENE

Detective Chief Superintendent Jim Hobson replaces Hoban. He sees his first 'Ripper' victim on 6 February 1977. Irene Richardson's intestines have spilled onto the street. Vaginal swabs indicate sexual activity by the assailant. He had masturbated over his victim, rather than raping her. Tyre tracks nearby offer hope. But laborious hand checking of every possible vehicle reveals 100,000 possible matches.

'TINA'

Patricia Atkinson had last been seen out on Saturday 23 April 1977. Inside her flat, next to her battered and bloodied body, is a size 7 Dunlop Warwick boot print.

JAYNE

The murder in June of Jayne MacDonald, an 'innocent', brings the press and public down in full force on the police. Assistant Chief Constable George Oldfield is now in charge. The investigation is run from the Millgarth station in the centre of Leeds. The task is monumental. Police process through punch cards, paper statements and transfer everything in longhand.

"I would say we were sort of still not quite in the bronze age with regards to paper but that's how we worked....there was something up to 4 tonnes of paperwork held at Millgarth police station which caused the floors to creak and of course that had to be reinforced. But there was no other system."

Andrew Laptew, Detective Constable

The largest manhunt in British history is gearing up. Police will question Sutcliffe nine times. Every time, the police will accept his alibi.

MAUREEN

Maureen Long should be dead from the injuries she sustains on 10 July 1977. Assistant Chief Constable Oldfield pleads to speak to her before surgery. She gives a brief description of a white 35-year-old man. After her operation, she remembers nothing. But a night watchman tells police he saw a white car with black roof leaving the scene. This is Sutcliffe's car. But the guard wrongly says it's a Ford Cortina Mark II. This is the favoured model of thousands of

taxi drivers. One taxi driver is placed under 24-hour surveillance. Meanwhile, over 300 police interview nearly 200,000 people.

At the end of August, Sutcliffe replaces his white Corsair car with a red one.

“When the murders broke in Manchester we thought well, he’s spreading his territory, his hunting ground. And there was a fear that, where’s it gonna end, where’s he gonna extend these boundaries? Really, you couldn’t predict where it was going to be.”

Andrew Laptew, Detective Constable

JEAN

On 15 October, the police find Manchester mum of two Jean Jordan’s missing handbag. They also find the hidden compartment where she’d secreted Sutcliffe’s £5 note. Exhaustive investigations narrow potential interviewees down to 8,000 men. They interview Sutcliffe at home. Sutcliffe calmly convinces them he was home the night of Jean’s murder. On the later date, when her body was nearly decapitated, he says he had a housewarming party. His wife confirms his alibis.

MARILYN

Another survivor of Sutcliffe, Marilyn Moore, gives police a now familiar description of a white, bearded thirty-something man. Tyre tracks match those at the scene of Irene Richardson.

YVONNE

Yvonne Pearson’s body is only discovered in March, two months after her murder. As Sutcliffe had been disturbed, he hadn’t stabbed her. Police aren’t sure to connect her to the Ripper victims.

HELEN RYTKA

A police dog discovers her body on 3 February 1978. The hammer and stab wounds are frighteningly familiar.

VERA

At 8:10am on Wednesday 17 May, the mutilated body of Vera Millward is found. Tyre tracks nearby match those found at Marilyn and Irene’s crime scenes.

Police are stumped as to why the killings stop for the next 11 months.

JO

The hammer and stab wounds on Josephine Whitaker confirm the return of ‘The Ripper’ in April 1979.

I’M JACK

On 16 April, Oldfield announces a new lead. Letters sent to him claiming to be from the Ripper postmarked Sunderland, have forensic matches to previous cases. Despite the predictions in the letters having been wrong as often as they’re right, Oldfield is convinced of their authenticity when an audiotope later arrives.

“I’m Jack. I see you are still having no luck catching me. I have the greatest respect for you George but Lord, you are no nearer catching me now than four years ago when I started.”

Experts say it’s a Wearside accent and the speaker becomes known as “Wearside Jack”. Police attention is diverted wholly to the search for this person. When the voice is played at a press conference, 50,000 calls are made to the police. It is the last thing an investigation buried in paperwork needs.

The voice taunts Oldfield. He becomes obsessed by finding that voice.

“...what you often get in police investigations that are of this magnitude is what psychologists call confirmation bias, where a certain piece of information looks quite attractive and when you have that attractive information and you want to solve the case and you want it to end. Your mind tends to fixate on that piece of information and fail to question it, fail to consider

alternatives and fail to look at all the reasons why that information is not helpful to you.”

Laurence Alison, Forensic Psychologist

Police interview 40,000 suspects and a £1million publicity campaign launches. Wearside Jack's letters are reproduced on posters and billboards.

On 29 July 1979, police visit Sutcliffe about his vehicle being in the red light districts of Manchester, Leeds and Bradford.

But Sutcliffe's handwriting doesn't match 'Jack's and his softly spoken accent isn't Geordie. And crucially, the police interviewing him aren't aware that he's been spoken to four times before. One of those times was to do with the '£5 note' inquiry.

Despite being unaware of all of this, Detective Constable Andrew Laptew is deeply suspicious of Sutcliffe. He compiles a report and takes it to a senior officer. The officer dresses Laptew down for ignoring the lack of accent match and the insistence on matching photo fits.

Sutcliffe is again discounted.

This is one of the nine times that Sutcliffe is interviewed before being arrested.

Three more women will die after Laptew's report on Sutcliffe.

The stress takes down Oldfield who suffers several heart attacks and is hospitalised.

Police officers become objects of derision for their inability to get their man.

“You know, you'd go for a drink somewhere to your local and they'd ridicule you.”

Andrew Laptew, Detective Constable

BARBARA

On 2 September 1979 the body of another victim is found. Barbara Leach isn't a prostitute, she's a student. Vigilante groups now patrol the streets.

The police publicity campaign reminds people to be on the lookout for men with a Geordie accent.

Finally, a new computer programme is used to track the registration numbers of vehicles sighted near the attacks. But if anything, it just adds to the information overload.

Police narrow down the list of suspects who received the new £5 note found in Jean Jordan's handbag to just 300. Sutcliffe is on this list, has a beard, a gap in his teeth and his car has repeatedly been seen in red light districts.

But Sutcliffe's wife provides him with alibis and he doesn't have a Geordie accent.

MARGUERITE

Because Sutcliffe strangles Marguerite Walls in August 1980, she isn't initially included as a Ripper victim.

BANDARA

Dr Bandara Upadhyia is walking the suburban streets on 24 September when she's attacked. A neighbour comes out because of the noise and the doctor lives. Despite being hammered and describing the attacker as having a beard, police don't connect her attack.

THERESA

Theresa Syke's boyfriend hears the screams and is watching through the window of their home as the hammer goes through her skull. He shoots out and Sutcliffe speeds off. Police again don't connect her attack.

JACQUELINE

Jacqueline Hill's handbag is found by another student. He takes it home and shows it to his flatmate who, remarkably, is an ex-Hong Kong policeman. Seeing that nothing has been stolen and there's blood on it, he calls the police. Again, police are reluctant to call Jacqueline a Ripper victim.

The Day A Plane Landed On The George Washington Bridge

stuffnobodycaresabout.com

Stuff Nobody Cares About

A not so random collection of observations about things you should care about



50 Years Ago Today – How Philip Ippolito Landed His Airplane On The George Washington Bridge



Philip Ippolito and passenger Joseph Brennan Jr. made an emergency landing on the George Washington Bridge, December 26, 1965. photo: Life Magazine

The world was amazed in 2009 when Captain Chesley “Sully” Sullenberger landed his hobbled jetliner on the Hudson River without any loss of life. It was an incredible feat of savvy piloting.

A forgotten episode of amazing aeronautical maneuvering occurred 50 years ago when on Sunday, December 26, 1965, 19-year-old Philip Ippolito of the Bronx, made a successful emergency landing on the top level of the George Washington Bridge.



Flight path of Philip Ippolito

Ippolito had rented a 34 foot wide Aeronca Champion single prop plane for \$10 per hour for two hours from Ramapo Valley Airport in Spring Valley, NY. He planned on a morning joy ride to visit a former flight instructor friend in Red Bank, NJ. Along with Ippolito was a friend, passenger, Joseph F. Brennan Jr., 39. The pair departed from Spring Valley at 9 a.m.

About 20 minutes into the flight at an altitude of 3,100 feet over Manhattan, the engine began to falter. Ippolito kept trying to revive the engine but it was not working. With the plane losing altitude rapidly and the engine sputtering, Ippolito looked over the icy Hudson River and thought of trying to make a water landing. He asked Brennan if he could swim to which Brennan replied, “Not a stroke.”

Ippolito quickly thought about his options on where to make an emergency landing. The New Jersey Meadowlands, which Ippolito thought would be too soft

1: Plane
embarked 2:
engine
problems 3:
GW Bridge –
illustration
New York
Times

and swampy from recent rain and the George Washington Bridge looming a couple of miles ahead to the north with relatively light traffic. With no time to lose, Ippolito turned the plane around and headed for the bridge.



Philip Ippolito weaves through the George Washington Bridge's suspension cables towards New Jersey – photo: New York Times

As the plane approached the bridge, the engine had completely conked out. Battling wind gusts of up to 28 miles per hour, Ippolito banked the plane to the left, weaving it successfully through the bridge's suspension cables, each 89 feet apart, and headed towards New Jersey as he descended to the bridge's roadway. Ippolito made his way towards the two unused lanes of the bridge's center roadway where a small divider was set up to separate east and westbound traffic.

Ippolito glided in at 90 miles per hour and as he touched down the plane's wingtip barely clipped a tanker truck which ruined what would have been a perfect landing. The impact with the truck spun the plane around and forced the nose to grind into the roadway. As the plane came to a halt a couple of hundred feet later, the windshield shattered, the propeller bent and pieces of the wing and struts were scattered along the road.

The driver of the tanker truck Woodrow Leone told the *New York Times*, "I was driving along about 40 when I happened to glance in my side view mirror and I saw this plane coming up on me from the left. It was a funny feeling I didn't know what to think or do."



Plane lands on George Washington Bridge. photo: Life Magazine

Emerging from the plane, Ippolito had bruises all over his body and Brennan lost a tooth and had a deep gash on his chin. Other than that, there were no other injuries and both men were released from Columbia Presbyterian Hospital the following day.

Maybe the most incredible thing about the entire incident is that after the plane crashed, traffic kept moving.

Drivers on the bridge who witnessed the landing slammed their cars to a halt to stare in disbelief. But as jaded as New Yorkers are, drivers quickly resumed their trips. When the the Port Authority police arrived they kept traffic flowing as they told rubberneckers to move on, there's nothing to see here!

In 1967 the Federal Aviation Administration concluded their investigation of the crash and charged that Ippolito had failed to check the fuel tank cap which came off during the flight causing the plane to lose fuel and the engine to sputter. The F.A.A. claimed that when Ippolito landed he was not in an emergency situation, implying the entire episode was a stunt! Elizabeth Bowers, the F.A.A. hearing officer, concluded Ippolito could have made a safe

landing at Teterboro Airport five miles away instead of the George Washington Bridge, which was not an appropriate place to make an emergency landing.

Ippolito's pilot license was suspended for six months. Upon appeal in April 1968 Ippolito was vindicated and his suspension was overturned.

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Plastic surgery model travels to Carmel for latest procedure

theindychannel.com

Had six ribs removed for thinner waist-line

Beth Vaughn, beth.vaughn@wrtv.com

10:24 PM, May 19, 2016

11:55 PM, May 19, 2016



CARMEL, Ind. -- Pixee Fox's hobby has become her career. She works as a plastic surgery model. The job description is exactly as it sounds.

Fox grew up in Sweden. She had become an electrician but wasn't happy with the direction of her life or how she looked. So, she moved to the United States to start her

transition.

"Where I come from in Sweden, no one is doing plastic surgery," Fox said.

Fox felt more accepted in America where she says plastic surgery is welcomed and encouraged.

"Doesn't matter if I want to be a plastic model or I want to be an electrician, I can do whatever," Fox explained.

Her plastic surgery diary is growing.

"I had one mini brow lift. I had two eyelid surgeries. I had three nose jobs. I had some

fillers and I also have fillers in my lips and a bit of Botox. I've had four boob jobs. I had the rib surgery, six ribs removed, and I had a labiaplasty and a Brazilian butt lift with liposuction," she said.

"And laser hair removal and permanent make-up," Fox added.

That's a lot of surgeries. It's cost her thousands of dollars and a lot of time.

*Travels to Indiana for procedure to slim her waist WRTV
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"I'm not able to live a normal life like other people can and go to work and call in sick," she said, "I have to quit my work, basically, to be able to do some surgeries."



Pixee getting measured for her rib removal surgery

One of her most dramatic surgeries brought her to Carmel, Indiana: Rib Removal. She wanted three from each side removed to decrease her waist-size.

"The hardest thing to find was somebody (who) actually took me seriously enough to do it for me, for cosmetic reasons," Fox explained.

Her online research led her to Dr. Barry Eppley with Eppley Plastic Surgery in Carmel. She traveled here last year for the rib removal.

"Ribs wrap around. Some are attached to your sternum, others are not. They're called free-floating ribs. The bottom ribs, usually 9, 10, 11 and 12, are called free floaters," Dr. Eppley explained.

He removed portions of ribs 10, 11 and 12. As you can imagine, there is some pain associated with the procedure.



Pixee post-surgery when six of her ribs were removed

"Everybody knows there's a lot of meat on ribs. For those of us who like to eat ribs, that's meat," he said, "For me as a surgeon, that's muscle. There isn't any question, you have to remove some muscle to take them off the ribs when you do it."

The surgery didn't phase Fox. She was back in her corset two days later, measuring her waist at 16 inches.

"I have a vision and slowly, but surely, I'm getting there," said Fox.

Fox says her goal is to look like a cartoon character. With each new surgery, she says she's getting happier.

Pixee before the rib surgery, and after, one year apart

That's exactly what Dr. Eppley says his business helps achieve.



"Plastic surgery is self-image surgery," he said.

With that mindset and years of education and training, Dr. Eppley takes on surgeries many plastic surgeons deny. Rib removal is one of those surgeries. Skull sculpting is another.

"My suspicion is there's a really small number, certainly less than a handful of surgeons that do it, and maybe I might be the only one doing it," he said.

That's why his business has grown online. People from all across the globe find his website, consult with him through e-mail and then travel to Carmel to transform

through surgery.

"The historical concept, 'Well, you gotta go to Beverly Hills, you have to go to New York City. These are the only places where these things go on.' Well the reality is that's really not true," Eppley said.

Eppley says his patient list includes people who've traveled from places as far away as Australia and Bulgaria for surgeries.

Fox traveled from North Carolina after moving from Sweden.

While Fox couldn't tell us exactly what she paid to have her ribs removed, Eppley's office told RTV6 the approximate cost for a Rib Removal ranges from \$11,900 to \$18,500 with a disclaimer that the costs are an estimate only.

And Dr. Eppley continues to treat different kinds of patients every day. He recently said he did another rib removal surgery of 12 ribs, six more than what made Pixee's waist shrink.



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Proposed Minneapolis ballot item would require police to carry insurance

startribune.com

Supporters say change would add incentive to avoid misconduct.

By Erin Golden Star Tribune



Union President Bob Kroll dismissed the insurance plan, saying it would inhibit officers.

A measure that would require police officers to carry professional liability insurance could be on Minneapolis ballots in November's general election.

Members of the Committee for Professional Policing, a local police accountability group, plan to deliver about 12,000 petition signatures to the city clerk on Thursday. If enough of those signatures are verified — 6,869 are required — the group's proposed city charter amendment will be referred to the City Council to be placed on the ballot.

The "Police Insurance Amendment" would allow the city to pay the base rate for officers' insurance coverage, but premium increases triggered by cases of officer misconduct would be covered by the officers involved in those incidents. That's a change from current practice, under which the city is self-insured and determines if it will cover police misconduct settlements on an individual basis.

The shift would give officers a direct financial incentive to stay in line, proponents say, and cut the settlements paid out by the city in cases of officer misconduct. Between 2012 and September 2015, Minneapolis spent \$6.6 million on settlements. The police union's president, meanwhile, warns that such a policy would prompt officers to interact less with the public, for fear of financial repercussions.

"This common-sense approach works much like car insurance," Dave Bicking, the Committee for Professional Policing's campaign chairman said in a statement. "Just like bad drivers, officers who engage in misconduct will see their premiums increase and those who don't improve may eventually be priced out or become uninsurable."

The group has been working on the idea for at least six years, but has faced several setbacks, including a revision of the city's charter that forced them to rewrite an earlier proposal. The most recent signature drive began about three years ago, said Michelle Gross, president of Communities United Against Police Brutality.

Over that time, Gross said she and others have remained concerned about the city's inability to get a handle on police misconduct issues.

"The mechanisms that exist now, like the Office of Police Conduct Review, they never worked and frankly they're designed to fail," she said. "We have to come up with something that isn't controlled by the city and brings an element of external risk management."

Gross said she's not aware of any other cities that require police to carry professional liability insurance, though it is required for some federal law enforcement officials.

Legal questions

Before putting the measure on the ballot, city officials will need to determine if it meets the requirements for a charter amendment and examine potential conflicts with state and federal laws. In Minneapolis, citizens cannot refer issues to the ballot that create city ordinances. They can, however, attempt to make amendments to the city's charter, which outlines the broad powers provided to the city and its offices.

Meanwhile, state law requires cities to "defend and indemnify any of its officers and employees," so long as those employees were carrying out their official duties and "not guilty of malfeasance in office, willful neglect of duty, or bad faith." And if the amendment were approved, changes to insurance would have to be negotiated, said Lt. Bob Kroll, president of the police union. Kroll said requiring insurance would have an unintended impact on officers' behavior: "They're not going to get out of their cars for anything."

"The hard workers, the aggressive workers, the ones I would like policing my neighborhood are the ones that also get the complaints, because they're having the contacts with people," he said. "If you impose ridiculous things like that, the officer's solution is career preservation."

City Attorney Susan Segal said she has not received a formal request from the City Council to provide a legal opinion on the proposed charter amendment.

Gross said she's confident the proposal will stand up to legal questions.

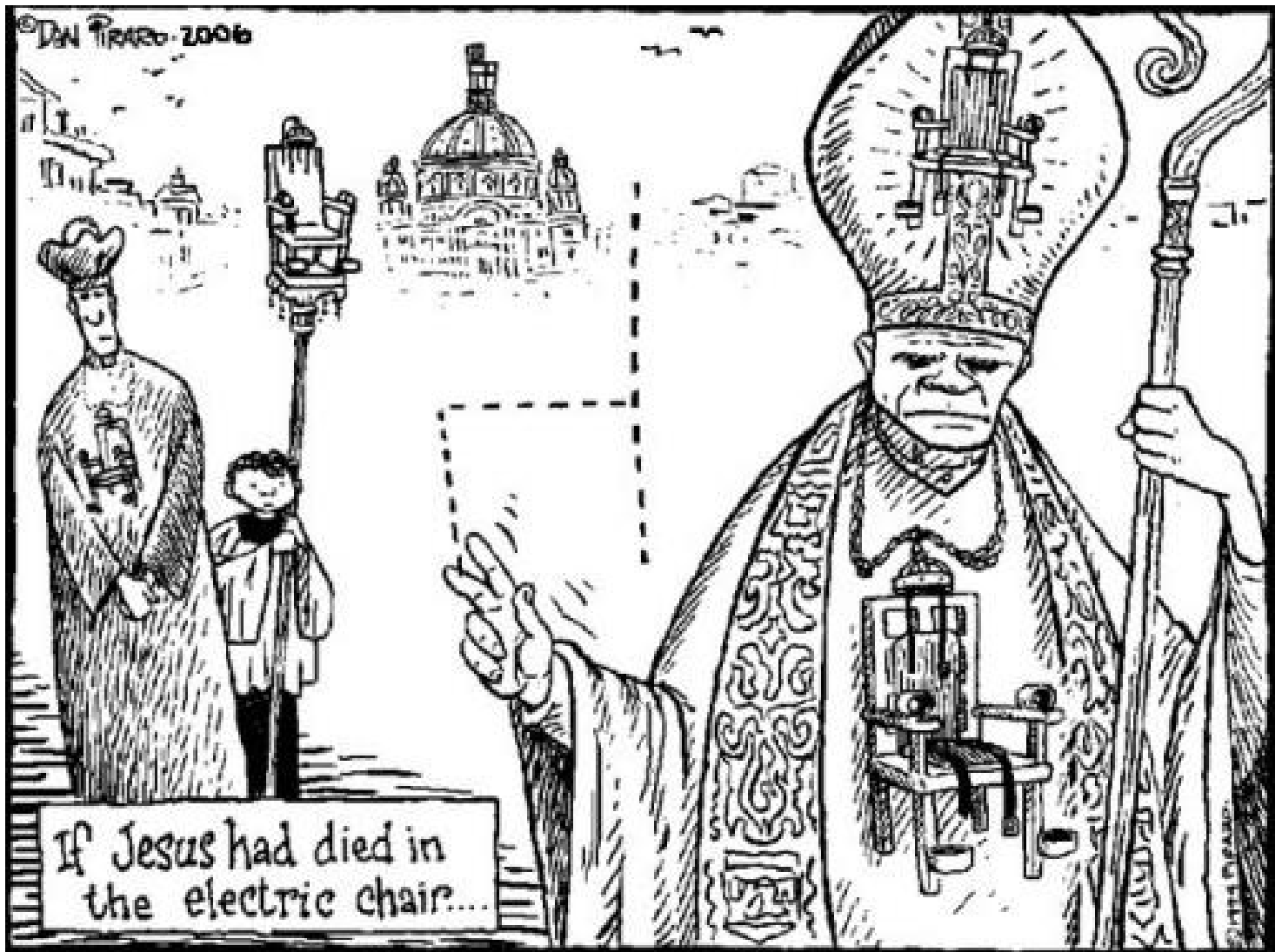
"We worked with a whole bevy of attorneys, insurance professionals, labor lawyers, a whole group of advisers to ensure that we were putting together something that was actually legal," she said.

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- Rosenblum: Young St. Paul writer and artist gets a big jolt from 50 Coffees

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If Jesus had died in
the electric chair...

<http://www.worldwideweirdnews.com/2016/05/29-Priest-caught-having-sex-with-cow.html>

Priest caught having sex with a cow

By: Feng Qian

A priest tried to swim across a lake after being caught having sex with a cow, according to police in South Africa.

Limpopo police said that they received calls about a priest being assaulted after being caught having sex with a cow in public.

The incident began when a man identified as Washington, caught the priest in the act of bestiality behind bushes.

Washington began yelling at the priest identified as Pastor Nkundlande.

The priest of the Zion Christian Church, also known as ZCC Church, allegedly dragged the cow that was grazing in a field and had sex with it.

Washington called other residents to join him with weapons and they began to pursue the priest. Nkundlande tried to swim across a river, but he was detained and assaulted.

Luckily, the police quickly arrived at the scene and escorted the priest to safety. Nkundlande has since been fired from the church.

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*Private Force and the
Making of States, c. 1100–1500*

Benjamin de Carvalho

2016

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Private Force and the Making of States, c. 1100–1500

Benjamin de Carvalho

Understanding the role of private force in the making of states poses quite a conundrum. The current use of the term ‘private force’ is irremediably associated with the state, and when we refer to private force, we do not mean the use of force in the private sphere – private violence, so to speak, as opposed to violence in public display. Instead the term describes force wielded by private actors as non-state actors. The concept of private force is therefore unthinkable without the concept of the state, as it is precisely the emergence of the state that is the condition of possibility of private force. To be sure, we may find examples of force used by ‘non-rulers’ before the emergence of the state. Yet, that force is not similar to private force after the emergence of states as autonomous moral universes covering the entirety of the globe. In this world, force wielded by private actors is by definition non-state, and if not condoned by it, a *de facto* and *de jure* challenge to the authority of the state.

This chapter shows how the distinction between the public and the private emerges with respect to the use of force in conjunction with the long rise of the state in Europe. As Patricia Owens has convincingly argued, there is no a priori public or private violence, as violence ‘is made public or private through political struggle and definition’ (Owens 2010: 32). Through a conceptual historical account of the organization of warfare through the five centuries of consolidation and centralization of power which crystallized in the sovereign state, I show that ‘[s]ome forms of violence are *made* public and others are *made* private through historically varying ways of organizing and justifying force’ (ibid.: 32). Echoing Peter W. Singer (2008), Owens draws attention to the fact that the distinction between private and public violence has never been ‘solidly fixed’ (Owens 2010: 18). In drawing a historical conceptual analysis of the changing organization of military power in the making of states, I show why we need to take an empirical rather than an ideological approach to the distinction between different types of force, as only then can we hope to understand why and for what purposed power was organized in specific ways, and the consequences of that organization.

The chapter takes as its starting point the late eleventh century, a period when public authorities had been decimated throughout Christendom and where kings no longer held the aura of public authority, but were (private) contestants for public authority on equal footing with their competitors. Both public and private force was private, so to speak. I proceed in five sections. The first addresses the relationship between war-making and state-making, a relationship which is central to much of the literature on state formation and to our further discussion.

The next three sections address the chronology of changes in the organization of force, and move from warfare as a knightly (largely) private enterprise to the wars of mercenaries, culminating in the early attempts at holding standing permanent armies around the late fifteenth century. The claim is not that this process was linear or inevitable, and, as demonstrated in the last section, the centralization of the legitimate means of warfare in the hands of public authorities did not mean the end of private enterprise in a world of states. Rather, private enterprise continued alongside public force, albeit in a different character.

Force in the making of states

The link between states and war is well established, and there is little doubt that wars have had an important impact on state formation in Europe (see Davis and Pereira 2008; Pereira 2008). Charles Tilly's *Coercion, Capital and European States* (1992), for example, has shown how the requirements of warfare forced states to consolidate their administrative and economic apparatus, and institutionalize the practice of war as an intrinsic part of the state. But the link between violence and the state is not just empirical. Violence is central to the state also at the conceptual level. As Max Weber put it:

If no social institutions existed which knew the use of violence, then the concept of 'state' would be eliminated ... Force is a means specific to the state. Today the relation between the state and violence is an especially intimate one ... We have to say that a state is a human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory. (Weber 1963: 78)

This monopoly of legitimate violence in turn rests on a specific distinction between private and public property, a separation that first emerged during the Middle Ages. It is important to keep in mind, though, that although we can trace this distinction back to the Middle Ages, private and public force operate, and have operated, differently at different times and places. What is central to Weber's ideal type of the state, is that its central characteristic is the legitimate monopoly of the use of force. The key impetus behind this monopolization came during the Middle Ages, which saw an increasing tendency of states to monitor, control, and monopolize the effective means of violence in (what was to become) their territory. Illustrating this process is the fact that nobles lost their right to wage private war (Tilly 1992: 68–9). In fact, as Norbert Elias has noted:

The society of what we call the modern age is characterized, above all in the West, by a certain degree of monopolization. Free use of military weapons is denied the individual and reserved to a central authority of whatever kind ... The financial means thus flowing into this central authority maintain its monopoly of military force, while this in turn maintains the monopoly of taxation. (Elias 1996: 345–6)

While this is a fairly obvious state of affairs to the contemporary commentator, this was not the case in early medieval Europe. In fact, at the beginning of the twelfth century, the disintegration of the Roman Empire had resulted in a mosaic of fragments counting 'hundreds of principalities, bishoprics, city-states, and other authorities [exercising] overlapping control in the small hinterlands of their capitals' (Tilly 1992: 40). The story of the formation of the

modern state is the story of how this process was reverted; how the pieces of the European mosaic increased in size and decreased in number.

By the end of the eleventh century, this transformation was far from completed. Great autonomy was exerted by the feudal lords, and ‘each castle in the country had become a center of rule independent of the [ruler’s] castle’ (Poggi 1978: 26). The kings of twelfth-century Europe were *primus inter pares*; they were the most powerful of the princes, but not strong enough to hold all their rivals in check. In twelfth-century Europe, heavily armoured knights were exercising direct lordship over nucleated peasant villages, and, final authority lay not with the king, but with the feudal lord, duke, count or baron (Stacey 1994: 29; Strayer 1973: 49–50). The inherent trend of feudalism towards fragmentation of power to the advantage of the vassal fief holders had led to the erosion of the landed patrimony of the kings, who by the twelfth century ‘had learned to conceive of the territories they ruled as their own [family] patrimonies’ (Poggi 1978: 35). In short, the starting point for the political centralization of the state was the private estates of rulers, in fierce competition with feudal rivals.

Thus, in order to maintain their fragile position as *primus inter pares*, the king engaged in ‘private wars’ against the other *seigneurs* of the country. The resulting trend towards the creation of a criss-crossing pattern of competing power networks, where rival lords and kings claimed sovereignty over the same territories had created a situation often referred to as ‘feudal anarchy’ (ibid.: 27, 31), where even the smallest knights ‘retained the rights and functions of rule within their estates; here they continued to hold sway like little kings’ (Elias 1996: 317). In these early times of state-building, the basis for the king’s power, as well as the resources he could draw on in order to fight the neighbouring barons or princes and assert his power, were his private family possessions (ibid.: 281). I will concentrate on the period between approximately 1100 and 1500, as this period marks the beginning of the era of the supremacy in combat of the mounted knight, while 1477 saw the collapse of the duchy of Burgundy, the last feudal alternative to the state. The end of the fifteenth century also witnessed a change in the political atmosphere in Europe: the economic situation was improving after the end of the Hundred Years War (1337–1453), and the frequency of warfare was declining. In so doing, I will account from how war changed from being a largely private matter to increasingly becoming the sole prerogative of the ruler. By successfully reforming the ways wars were fought, centralizing rulers were able to win the power contest against their feudal rivals, and reform a conduct that counteracted political centralization (see Avant 2000).

Social order and the medieval knight, c. 1100–1300

While the early medieval period saw attempts at political centralization frustrated by private war making, it simultaneously marks the beginning of a number of processes that came to curtail the war-making rights of private knights. In fact, the early Middle Ages experienced important changes in the ideas about war. Between the year 1000 and the beginning of the twelfth century, Europe witnessed what amounted to a large-scale ‘peace programme’: repression of pillage, the birth of chivalry, the formation of the idea of the crusade and modification of the relationship between the powerful and the poor. In large part, the drivers behind these reforms were a ruling class, which now identified more closely with the need for order than their rights to wage war. Ecclesiastical efforts also ran in parallel with this, leading to the emerging chivalric code of conduct. Where knighthood had appeared from the early 1100s as an amalgam of military profession and social rank prescribing the behaviour of its adherents in both peace and war, the bearing of arms was increasingly ‘seen as a noble dignity connected

with a code of conduct, the violation of which might cost a man his status as a warrior' (Stacey 1994: 29–30).

Moreover, knighthood, with all its prescriptions of conduct, became a way of life for the medieval warriors. War in the Middle Ages was thus waged between members of the same class, who regarded each other as equals. This entitled them to certain privileges, for example the right to be ransomed – and not killed – if captured in war, but also bound them by obligations towards humane conduct towards prisoners of similar social rank. During war, these warriors gained honour and reputation on the battlefields, and during peaceful times tournaments gave them the opportunity to show their prowess in combat. But although the norms and ideals of chivalry emerged in the early Middle Ages, few attempts were made to record them systematically before the end of the thirteenth century. At this time, didactic treatises on warfare, military discipline and the organization of armies began to appear (Contamine 1984: 119). Examples of these are *Enseignements et ordenances pour un seigneur qui a des guerres et grans gouvernements a faire* (1327) by Theodore Paleologus, *L'arbre des batailles* (c. 1387) by Honoré Bovet, *Le livre des fais d'armes et de chevalerie* (1410) by Christine de Pisan and *Le Jouvencel* (c. 1470) by Jean de Bueil. Advocating honourable and virtuous conduct, these treatises also set forth to reform the role of the knight, turning the emphasis away from virtuous conduct in battle per se, to the virtuous qualities of 'public service'. In *Book of Order and Chivalry* (c. 1310) Raymon Lull makes the case that force must be put in public service: 'To a knyght appereyneth that he be lover of the comyn wele. For by the comynalte of the people was the chyvalrye founded and establysshed. And the comyn wele is gretter and more necessary than propre good and specyall' (cited in Vale 1981: 22–3). These treaties, in turn, were closely linked to the emerging state rulers. In fact, many were initiated by the rulers themselves, as their authors were either at the service of the kings, or eager to receive or retain their protection.

In addition an emergent body of military regulations and ordinances sought to regulate the relationship between private force and public service. Based on the treatises, ordinances were sent to the captains of most armies throughout Europe. *Estatutz, ordenances et cusutmes a tenir en l'ost* was issued by Richard II in 1385, and *Statutes and Ordinaunces to be keped in time of Werre* was published by Henry V in 1419; in Italy Orso degli Orsini drew up the *Governo et exercitio de la militia* for Alfonso I the Magnanimous of Aragon in 1447 (Contamine 1984: 119–21), and towards the mid-fifteenth century, the tract on *The Way Soldiers Dress in the Kingdom of France Both on Foot and on Horseback* was issued. During the same period, it also became common to issue a general edict announcing the disciplinary orders to each army at the moment it assembled. In these ways, private force was increasingly tied to public loyalty and institutionalized in uniforms and insignia borne in battle, symbolizing loyalty to the king. By the same token, private force was legitimized through its public utility. As Strayer (1973: 56) put it, 'loyalty to the state became more than a necessity and a convenience; it was now a virtue'.

Institutionalizing these new rules and regulations was not a straightforward process, and attempts at reforming the ideals of chivalry were often met with resistance from a warring class which had the *chevalier errant* (or roving knight), whose vocation was the pursuit of just quarrels, as its ideal. However, this aspect should not be overemphasized, as a large part of it is a fiction cast upon it by later writers. In fact, one should not leave from sight the fact that throughout the medieval period, money was the almost obligatory link between soldiers and authority, and that this is precisely what plunged Europe into a vicious circle of violence. From about 1250 to 1450, private armies of mercenaries, who made a living by plunder when they were not employed, ravaged most of Europe. The Great Companies spread terror in France and Spain, the Free Companies pillaged Italy and the Ecorcheurs ('skinners') ravaged France and the Western part of Germany. As one medieval commentator complained: 'I see all Holy

Christendom so tormented by wars and divisions, robberies and dissensions that one can scarcely name a petty province, be it a duchy or county, which enjoys peace' (Contamine 1984: 90, 123–5).

The wars of the mercenaries, c. 1250–1450

The two last centuries of the Middle Ages saw little peace, as the professional soldier of the period was far from responsive to arguments concerned with public duty and common good. No matter if they fought because of feudal duty or wages, ransom and booty provided a major incentive for the medieval knight to wage war. The emphasis on private economic gain in warfare can be traced back to the law of arms, as knightly customs revolved around two fundamental propositions. Firstly, as Maurice Keen underlines, 'soldiering in the age of chivalry was regarded as a Christian profession, not a public service. Though he took up arms in a public quarrel, a soldier still fought as an individual, and rights were acquired by and against him personally, and not against the side for which he fought' (cited in Stacey 1994: 31). Every knight participated in wars with his own horse and equipment at his own risk. Thus, the medieval knight fought on his own, and not as a servant of the state. Secondly, the law of arms was of a contractual character, stipulating that serving in a war gave a right to a share of its profit. This right was legally enforceable and was judged by special courts, such as the Court of Chivalry in England and the Parliament of Paris in France. These profits were gained chiefly through pillaging, plunder and ransom.

The effectiveness and discipline of force depended largely on how well paid the soldiers were. Without reasonable wages, soldiers would use their power in their own private interest, even when under service of the prince. In the treatise on warfare *Le Jouvencel*, Jean de Brueil complained about the perfect lack of discipline in the armies, and the ease with these armies could dissolve into hordes of brigands and pillagers (Vale 1981: 164). In a system where 'public' force consisted of hired private individuals and groups on an ad hoc basis, the end of warfare often resulted in a surplus of large companies of men trained to fight and armed to the teeth. These soldiers 'either dissolved or formed a small and dangerous private army under the captain who had recruited them. Such 'free companies' were completely uncontrolled by any governmental agency' (Strayer 1973: 85). During the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, Europe was constantly either at war, or threatened by these armies of uprooted mercenaries who had turned to brigandage and private wars, and whose loyalty lay with private captains rather than with public authorities (Vale 1981: 155).

Private force was a widespread threat to the public peace, and also frustrated the attempts at centralization of power. Efforts to eliminate private wars, and the introduction of the idea of waging war on behalf of the public good were intended to limit pillage and banditry during war, but also to generate peace. Thus, the popularity of treatises such as *L'Arbre des Batailles* or *Le Jouvencel* among military leaders who were seeking to create disciplined chivalries is easily understandable, especially when contrasted with the medieval knight 'engaging in spontaneous acts of individual prowess' (Allmand 1976: 18). These manuals not only emphasized that soldiers should go nowhere at all without the license of the military commander, but also introduced the idea that paid soldiers were entitled neither to booty nor to ransom, and that those who went to war to pillage, were not to receive wages. This idea was crucial to the later public monopolization of warfare, as it introduced the idea of the soldier as a public servant bound to obey his paymaster, rather than fighting his own private battles. Theretofore, feudal knights and smaller barons had profited of declared wars between kings to fight each other, with the result that it was often difficult to see on which side they were fighting.

Illustrative of this is Robert Stacey's summary of the Hundred Years War:

in the extraordinary confusion...it was sometimes extremely difficult to tell who the prince was in whose name the various free companies, local lords, and wandering gangs of outright extortionists were in fact fighting. That they fought in the name of some prince mattered: without princely sanction their war was not a public one, and so by the law of arms they acquired no legally enforceable title to the ransoms and booty they captured. (Stacey 1994: 32)

The kings gradually claiming the profits of war for themselves, the knights and smaller barons were now losing what had been an important incentive to wage war.

While the medieval period witnessed a widespread *de jure* confusion in terms of who had the competent authority to wage war, there was increasingly a *de facto* monopolization of the means of war by greater lords and kings who controlled their territories in a quasi-sovereign manner. As such, while public authority did play a part in defining who had the right to wage war, and while there was an increasingly clear understanding of who was sovereign and who was not, there was still no 'absolute polarity between public and private warfare. The realities of power were simply too complex' (ibid.: 32). This is not to say that medieval warfare happened within a complete absence of rules, but rather to emphasize that the rules guiding warfare at the time were in place less to define the distinction between public and private than to 'protect the rights of the individual soldiers who joined in the fighting wherever they might choose to fight' (ibid.: 39). As individuals could no longer take part in looting wherever they wanted, a share in the plunder of war gradually came to depend on soldiers being duly enlisted on an army muster list and 'as the costs of war rose ever higher, only kings and a few other great lords could afford to maintain such a force' (ibid.: 32, 39).

By the fifteenth century, more or less successful attempts to restrict private war had been made by the kings of England, France, Castille and Aragon, whereas the German and Italian nobles still retained that right almost entirely to the extent that 'the feudal right of the noble to engage in private war whenever he considered justice to have been denied him existed [now] in direct proportion to the lack of central authority' (Allmand 1976: 27). Moreover, the introduction of permanent armies during the very end of the fifteenth century was not only the result of the evolution of institutions, a higher level of economic activity, or even improved systems of taxation. The standing armies were also a product of changes in the attitudes towards war. One of the conditions of possibility of their emergence were changes in the social function and role of the warring classes; from private feudal lords to servants of the public interest of the sovereign. In other words, the king's war had to become the kingdom's war, and rulers such as Charles VII of France were towards the mid-fifteenth century actively trying to break the privileged allegiance of the soldiers to certain princes or lords, and were now claiming for themselves alone the right to wage war (Contamine 1984: 168–9).

Towards permanent armies, c. 1450

A strong demand for soldiers led to an overflow of mercenaries, and the limited resources for wages at the ruler's disposal could only strengthen their dependence on pillaging. This changed somewhat as rulers started to maintain under arms a certain number of soldiers, even in times of peace. This increasingly shifted the power from private warring groups and feudal lords towards centralizing (state) rulers. As Norbert Elias (1996) noted, the kings of larger states such

as France or England for a long time had internal rivals to their power; princes or barons that had some sort of claim to rule, and against whom they had to defend and strengthen themselves. This is echoed by Tilly, who argues that within ‘any particular state ... local and regional powerholders have ordinarily had control of concentrated means of force that could, if combined, match or even overwhelm those of the state’ (Tilly 1992: 69). It was this balance that was shifting at the end of the fifteenth century. Slowly the rulers of Europe were starting to gain terrain over their rival barons and dukes. Once the principle was generally accepted that only the king had the right to make war – and prevent others from doing so – it had to be admitted also that only soldiers in the king’s service or under his license were permitted to bear arms. Thus, together with a build-up of the ruler’s permanent armies, the disarmament of the nobility increased the power of the sovereign over his earlier rivals.

Yet one should not overemphasize the importance of this in practice, as the level of discipline of the fifteenth-century standing armies was initially not very different from their predecessors. A number of measures were therefore introduced which aimed to increase the discipline and corporate identity of these armies. In 1473, the Burgundian army was the first to be differentiated by insignia that had no connection with social status. The role of the individualistic knight was thus more and more downplayed in the armies of the fifteenth century. As emphasized by Tilly (1992), the maintenance of a regular army required more resources and thus the introduction of new taxes. By the end of the fifteenth century, the *taille des gens de guerre*, a temporary tax levied in order to be able to pay mercenaries to stop them from plundering that had been introduced after the Hundred Years War, had become a permanent tax in France (Howard 1976: 18). As expenses related to the permanent maintenance of armed forces increased, only kings had resources to maintain standing armies. Warfare was now not only an activity reserved for the emerging states, but also an activity that was demanding increasingly higher resources. By maintaining larger standing armies, the business of war became the *de facto* and *de jure* monopoly of the state; noble knights and barons were losing both their right to engage in private warfare as well as the resources necessary to do so. The monopolization of warfare contributed to the centralization of power in the state. The fact that one now had to be enrolled on the official muster list of an army in order to get any share in plunder was a strong blow to the feudal knights and lords, for whom ‘the only way [to] get hold of more than the produce of their own fields was by plundering the fields of others ... and ransoming prisoners of war’ (Elias 1996: 317). Eliminating in part the economic rationality of war for the private competitors of the emerging states thus weakened their economic foundation and socio-political function. The king was now taking control of the checks and balances typical to feudalism. Unconditional loyalty to the kingdom – the last blow to the feudal independence of the nobility – was finally achieved by drawing the knights to the royal courts.

Conclusion

The state’s claims to monopolize the legitimate means of violence did not emerge *ex nihilo*, but was rather the result of a long process through which private force was increasingly bound to public service. The claim of the monopoly of the armed forces was not effective as long as the territory was constantly pillaged by roving companies of bandits. For a long time, rulers’ claim of the monopoly of the right to make war conflicted with the fact that large portions of the population were constantly under arms. By establishing regular standing armies the king could now put an end to the plundering of mercenaries in peacetime through fighting them, but also by eliminating their appearance at the end of wars – since the king’s soldiers now kept their functions also in times of peace.

The nobility had now lost its economic incentives and possibilities to wage war, and was increasingly losing its function as warriors. The warrior nobles were also losing their rights to bear arms; a right now reserved to the soldiers of the state – mostly laymen by the end of the fifteenth century. Revolutions in the practices of war such as the increased use of artillery also tipped the balance in favour of large states, which were the only ones to possess the resources to maintain sizable standing armies. Warfare was becoming a public business; a business assumed by soldiers no longer recruited from the nobility. Janice Thomson (1994) has argued that the rise of the sovereign state happened with the elimination of private violence. Her argument, in short, is that the emergence and enforcement of the idea of sovereignty as a new geo-spatial conception of politics led states, willingly or unwillingly, to address the ‘problem’ of private force, and in the end eliminate it. In her account, the state rose on the ashes of private violence, so to speak. It was the process of eliminating private force, by nationalizing armies on land and outlawing privateering at sea that led to the consolidation of a specific type of polity, the state. Yet, the fact that states increasingly became the only units able to legitimately wage wars does not mean that private force disappeared. Contrary to Thomson’s argument, there is no necessary linearity to such long-term processes, and the public monopolization of the means of violence did not bring the demise of private force altogether. As Tarak Barkawi (2010) has reminded us, even long after the age of nationalism, states came to draw upon foreigners for their armies. Moreover, as this chapter argues, and as shown throughout this Handbook, distinctions between public and private force vary across time and place, and we should avoid seeing the two in straightforward opposition, but rather as intertwined. Private force continued to play a role in international politics long after the consolidation of the state: states used privateers in a wide range of settings for centuries (Leira and de Carvalho 2010), states sponsored private military companies in the wars of religion (de Carvalho 2003, 2014), and private enterprise was, paradoxically enough, the central component of most (state) colonial ventures in the Atlantic (de Carvalho 2015; Chapter 4, this volume). As such, the sovereign state did not emerge as private force was eliminated. Rather, it emerged as the role of private force changed, and as it was re-intertwined with public force in different ways.

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The Delightful Perversity of Québec's Catholic Swears

atlasobscura.com

The Canadian province has expletives like no other.

by Dan Nosowitz

May 26, 2016



Graffiti in Québec which roughly translates to "We don't give a fuck about the special law (Bill 78)". (Photo: Gates of Ale/CC BY-SA 3.0) Graffiti in Québec which roughly translates to "We don't give a fuck about the special law (Bill 78)". (Photo: Gates of Ale/CC BY-SA 3.0) A snowy street in Montréal, looking towards the Notre Dame de Bonsecours Chapel. (Photo: Jazmin Million/CC BY-SA 2.0) A snowy street in Montréal, looking towards the Notre Dame de Bonsecours Chapel. (Photo: Jazmin Million/CC BY-SA 2.0) Montréal, c. 1910. (Photo: Philippe Du Berger/CC BY 2.0) Montréal, c. 1910. (Photo: Philippe Du Berger/CC BY 2.0) The stained glass window in Notre Dame de Bonsecours Chapel. (Photo: daryl_mitchell/CC BY-SA 2.0) The stained glass window in Notre Dame de Bonsecours Chapel. (Photo: daryl_mitchell/CC BY-SA 2.0) A mailbox with Québec French that roughly translates to "No fucking admail". (Photo: Gates of Ale/CC BY-SA 3.0) A mailbox with Québec French that roughly translates to "No fucking admail". (Photo: Gates of Ale/CC BY-SA 3.0)

Québec is bilingual, but reluctantly. As a French province with small pockets of English, and a few larger pockets that will willingly use both languages, the signs, by law, are in French. The language on the street is French. Ordering food or browsing a store will likely involve some amount of standard conversational French, and should you get in trouble with the law, it's going to be time to find a Francophile lawyer.

The profanity, though, is pure Québec.

Québec's swearing vocabulary is one of the weirdest and most entertaining in the entire world. It is almost entirely made up of everyday Catholic terminology—not alternate versions, but straight-up normal words that would be used in Mass to refer to objects or concepts—that have taken on a profane meaning. Many languages have some kind of religious terminology wrapped into profanity (think of English's "damn" or "goddammit"), but Québec's is taken to a totally different level.



The fact that the

Graffiti in Québec which roughly translates to "We don't give a fuck about the special law (Bill 78)".

(Photo: Gates of Ale/CC BY-SA 3.0) Graffiti in Québec which roughly translates to "We don't give a fuck about the special law (Bill 78)". (Photo: Gates of Ale/CC BY-SA 3.0) A snowy street in Montréal, looking towards the Notre Dame de Bonsecours Chapel. (Photo: Jazmin Million/CC BY-SA 2.0) A snowy street in Montréal, looking towards the Notre Dame de Bonsecours Chapel. (Photo: Jazmin Million/CC BY-SA 2.0) Montréal, c. 1910. (Photo: Philippe Du Berger/CC BY 2.0) Montréal, c. 1910. (Photo: Philippe Du Berger/CC BY 2.0) The stained glass window in Notre Dame de Bonsecours Chapel. (Photo: daryl_mitchell/CC BY-SA 2.0) The stained glass window in Notre Dame de Bonsecours Chapel. (Photo: daryl_mitchell/CC BY-SA 2.0) A mailbox with Québec French that roughly translates to "No fucking admail". (Photo: Gates of Ale/CC BY-SA 3.0) A mailbox with Québec French that roughly translates to "No fucking admail". (Photo: Gates of Ale/CC BY-SA 3.0)

region has unique swears is not itself unusual. Expletives are a curiously organic construction; despite the taboos and restrictions around using them, they persist, indicating a weird discrepancy. They are bad, yet we must have them. They change over time; during the age of Shakespeare, the word "bastard" was so foul that it was sometimes censored as "b-d". Yet now, in the U.S., it's a low-level swear at worst. Different languages and cultures develop their own library of swear words, and just how that happens can tell you quite a bit about that culture.

"I have heard that people swear with the things they are afraid of," says Olivier Bauer, a Swiss professor of religion who taught at the Université de Montréal and lived in the city for a decade. "So for English speaking people it's sex, in Québec it is the church, and in France or Switzerland it is maybe more sexual or scatological." Fear and power kind of tie together; swear words tend to be words that invoke something mysterious or scary or uncomfortable, and by using them we can tap into a bit of that power. (Yiddish, the swear words of which I grew up hearing, has about a dozen curses referring to the penis. I'm not sure which category that falls into.)

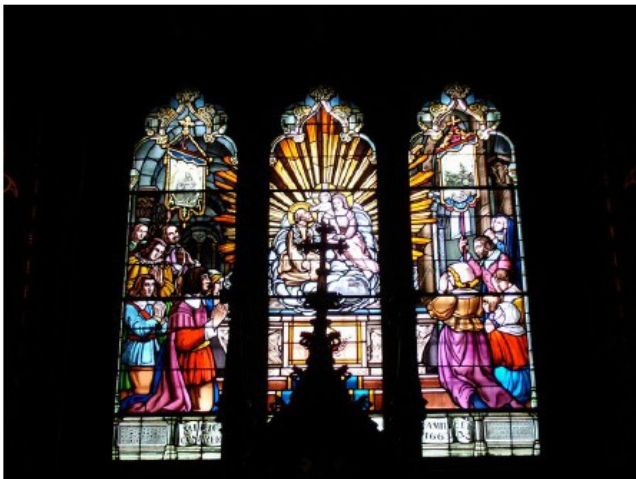
Québec French is mutually comprehensible with European French, but due to its isolation from Europe and geographical proximity to Anglophone Canada and the U.S. has developed into something a bit different. Without constant interaction with France (or Switzerland or Belgium, for that matter), Québec French has retained French words that have long since gone out of style in France, but has incorporated and mutated many English words that a Frenchman would likely not recognize. In France, a car would be referred to as a *voiture*, maybe an *auto*. In Québec, it's a *char*, an ancient word coming from the same root as the word "chariot."

Similarly, Québec has adopted whole bunches of North American English, but those aren't just English words pronounced with a Québec accent; they are sometimes mutated and their meanings even change. Some are just spelled differently; *moppe* in Québec French means "mop," and *toune* can mean a song, or a tune. "The noun *blonde* can be used on both sides of the Atlantic in the sense of a blonde-haired woman, but in Québec, it has the additional



Graffiti in Québec which roughly translates to "We don't give a fuck about the special law (Bill 78)". (Photo: Gates of Ale/CC BY-SA 3.0) Graffiti in Québec which roughly translates to "We don't give a fuck about the special law (Bill 78)". (Photo: Gates of Ale/CC BY-SA 3.0) A snowy street in Montréal, looking towards the Notre Dame de Bonsecours Chapel. (Photo: Jazmin Million/CC BY-SA 2.0) A snowy street in Montréal, looking towards the Notre Dame de Bonsecours Chapel. (Photo: Jazmin Million/CC BY-SA 2.0) Montréal, c. 1910. (Photo: Philippe Du Berger/CC BY 2.0) Montréal, c. 1910. (Photo: Philippe Du Berger/CC BY 2.0) The stained glass window in Notre Dame de Bonsecours Chapel. (Photo: daryl_mitchell/CC BY-SA 2.0) The stained glass window in Notre Dame de Bonsecours Chapel. (Photo: daryl_mitchell/CC BY-SA 2.0) A mailbox with Québec French that roughly translates to "No fucking admail". (Photo: Gates of Ale/CC BY-SA 3.0) A mailbox with Québec French that roughly translates to "No fucking admail". (Photo: Gates of Ale/CC BY-SA 3.0)

or *hostie* or *estie* (host, the bread used during communion), *câlisse* (chalice), *ciboire* (the container that holds the host), and *sacrament* (sacrament). These usually have some milder forms as well, slightly modified versions that lessen their blow. "For example, *tabarnouche* and *tabarouette* are non-vulgar versions of *tabarnak*, similar to 'shoot' and 'darn' in English," says Polesello.



Graffiti in Québec which roughly translates to "We don't give a fuck about the special law (Bill 78)". (Photo: Gates of Ale/CC

meaning of 'girlfriend,'" says Felix Polesello, the proprietor of Quebec language blog OffQc. "For example, *ma blonde* means 'my girlfriend.'"

Then there's a phrase like this, which I saw on a friend's neighbor's front door once: "La doorbell est fuckée." The word "fuck," for the record, is fairly common in Québec, but isn't really a swear; it's a mutated form of an English, but it's only barely rude, meaning "broken" or "messed up."

Québec has few swears that you'd also find in France. *Merde*, maybe. I've heard *enculer* before, which means something like the verb "to fuck" and is usually paired with something else to enhance it. But the best swears are the *sacres*.

The *sacres* is the group of Catholic swears unique to Québec. There are many of them; the most popular are probably *tabarnak* (tabernacle), *osti*

The *sacres* typically are interchangeable, rarely having any particular meaning by themselves. Most often you'll hear them used as all-purpose exclamations. If a Québécois stubs his or her toe, the resulting swears might be "tabarnak, tabarnak!" instead of "fuck fuck fuck." They can be inserted into regular sentences the way English swears can to vulgarly emphasize your statement. "For example, *un cave* means 'an idiot,' but *un estie de cave* means 'a fucking idiot,'" says Polesello.

Because the words are largely just

BY-SA 3.0) Graffiti in Québec which roughly translates to "We don't give a fuck about the special law (Bill 78)". (Photo: Gates of Ale/CC BY-SA 3.0) A snowy street in Montréal, looking towards the Notre Dame de Bonsecours Chapel. (Photo: Jazmin Million/CC BY-SA 2.0) A snowy street in Montréal, looking towards the Notre Dame de Bonsecours Chapel. (Photo: Jazmin Million/CC BY-SA 2.0) Montréal, c. 1910. (Photo: Philippe Du Berger/CC BY 2.0) Montréal, c. 1910. (Photo: Philippe Du Berger/CC BY 2.0) The stained glass window in Notre Dame de Bonsecours Chapel. (Photo: daryl_mitchell/CC BY-SA 2.0) The stained glass window in Notre Dame de Bonsecours Chapel. (Photo: daryl_mitchell/CC BY-SA 2.0) A mailbox with Québec French that roughly translates to "No fucking admail". (Photo: Gates of Ale/CC BY-SA 3.0) A mailbox with Québec French that roughly translates to "No fucking admail". (Photo: Gates of Ale/CC BY-SA 3.0)

meaningless statements of rage, there is an interesting ability in Québec French to create fantastic new strings of profanity that are, basically, untranslatable. Essentially you can just list *sacres*, connecting them with *de*, forever. *Crisse de câlisse de sacrement de tabarnak d'osti de ciboire!*, you might say after the Canadiens fail to make the NHL playoffs. The closest English translation would be something like "Fucking fuck shit motherfucker cockface asshole!" Or thereabouts. But strings of profanity like that in American English, though not unheard of,

are certainly not common. In Québec, letting loose with a string of angrily shouted Catholic terminology is something you're fairly likely to hear at some point.

So how did Québec end up with such a specific brand of swearing? "Without a doubt, the social institution that exercised the greatest influence, and had the most impact on Québec, was the Roman Catholic Church," writes Claude Bélanger, a historian at Montréal's Marianapolis College. When Québec was founded, in the early 1600s, the French Catholic Church played a huge role in its creation, building cities, forcibly converting the First Nations peoples who lived there, and controlling all community services until France officially made Québec a French province in 1663. Québec was ceded to Great Britain after the Seven Years' War in the mid-1700s, but the people of Québec continued to speak French and to take great pride in their French heritage.

Having a mostly secular government began to erode the popularity of the Catholic Church in Québec, until the Rebellions of 1837-1838. These were not dissimilar to the U.S. War of Independence, with the added wrinkles that English and French Canada were not especially friendly, and that the revolts failed. After the rebellions fell apart, martial law was declared in Montréal, and with turmoil all around them, the Québécois began to look to the organization that had always been there: the Church.



Graffiti in Québec which roughly

"I think the second half of the 19th century, that's when it became omnipresent," says Bauer. The number of Catholic congregations in Québec skyrocketed. The Church all but took over social services yet again, from education to marriage. The dominance of the Catholic Church in Québec went on far longer than anywhere else in North America, and indeed most places in Europe. Over 90 percent of the Quebec population regularly attended Catholic church services right up until 1960. Catholic newspapers flourished. Catholic schools became the vast majority of the sources of primary education in the province.

In 1960 that all changed; the election of Jean Lesage as the

translates to "We don't give a fuck about the special law (Bill 78)". (Photo: Gates of Ale/CC BY-SA 3.0) Graffiti in Québec which roughly translates to "We don't give a fuck about the special law (Bill 78)". (Photo: Gates of Ale/CC BY-SA 3.0) A snowy street in Montréal, looking towards the Notre Dame de Bonsecours Chapel. (Photo: Jazmin Million/CC BY-SA 2.0) A snowy street in Montréal, looking towards the Notre Dame de Bonsecours Chapel. (Photo: Jazmin Million/CC BY-SA 2.0) Montréal, c. 1910. (Photo: Philippe Du Berger/CC BY 2.0) Montréal, c. 1910. (Photo: Philippe Du Berger/CC BY 2.0) The stained glass window in Notre Dame de Bonsecours Chapel. (Photo: daryl_mitchell/CC BY-SA 2.0) The stained glass window in Notre Dame de Bonsecours Chapel. (Photo: daryl_mitchell/CC BY-SA 2.0) A mailbox with Québec French that roughly translates to "No fucking admail". (Photo: Gates of Ale/CC BY-SA 3.0) A mailbox with Québec French that roughly translates to "No fucking admail". (Photo: Gates of Ale/CC BY-SA 3.0)

premier of Québec found the province beginning what would come to be known as the Quiet Revolution. Secularization began in earnest as education was wrenched out of the hands of the Church through various means (standardizing curriculums, replacing Catholic secondary education with a pre-college school system known as CEGEP), and industries ranging from energy to mining to forestry were created as public institutions, undermining the Church's power.

This is all to say that the reason Québec developed the *sacres* is that in few other places was the grip of centralized religion quite so firm. But with the lessening prevalence of Catholicism in Québec, it's not at all clear that the *sacres* will survive. "It's still there but the young people like to use fuck, or son of a bitch, those are young kind of trendy, American slangs," says Bauer. Even weirder: without the Church in their lives, some young people very literally do not know what the *sacres* mean. "Among the young generation nobody knows exactly what *hostie* or *tabarnak* is, but it's still the heritage in Québec culture." The younger generation may still use the words because their parents and grandparents use them, but some of their power is lost.

That's totally unlike, say, "fuck," which has been a powerful word for hundreds of years. The power of sex never lessens, but the Catholic Church? That can ebb and flow. At a certain point, there's a possibility that the Québécois may decide that there's nothing especially powerful about a tabernacle. And then *tabarnak* will be nothing more than a box.

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The Long Quest to Find Ashkenaz, the Birthplace of Yiddish atlasobscura.com

Its location has long been debated.

by The Conversation

June 03, 2016



(Photo: Public Domain) (Photo: Public Domain) DNA of Yiddish speakers could have originated from four ancient villages in north-west Turkey.

This article was written by Eran Elhaik, Lecturer, University of Sheffield.

At 1,000 years, the search for the location of Ashkenaz – thought to be the birthplace of Ashkenazic Jews and the Yiddish language – is one of the longest quests in human history. It is perhaps second only in length to the search for Noah's Ark which began in the 3rd century AD.

The place name Ashkenaz occurs three times in the Bible, but by the Middle Ages the exact origin of Ashkenaz was forgotten. Because of the migration of the Ashkenazic Jews it later became associated with Germany. This led to all German Jews being considered "Ashkenazic", a term

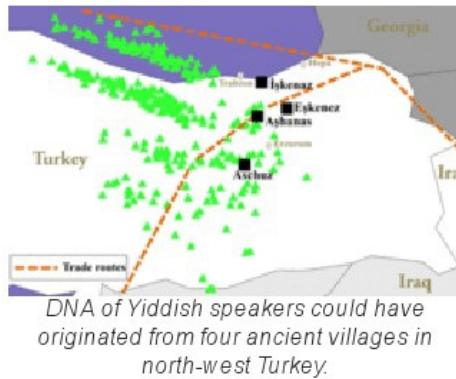
which was then applied to central and eastern European Jews who follow Ashkenazic religious customs and who speak Yiddish.

The Yiddish language – which consists of Hebrew, German, Slavic elements and is written in Aramaic – has been spoken at least since the 9th century AD, but its origins have been debated by linguists for several centuries. While some have suggested a German origin, others believe a more complex beginning for the language, starting in Slavic lands in Khazaria – the Middle Age Khazar Empire that covered present-day southern Russia, Kazakhstan, Ukraine, and parts of the Caucasus – and followed by Ukraine, and finally Germany. Although the language adopted a German vocabulary it retained its Slavic grammar – which is why Yiddish is often referred to as "bad German".

The inability of linguists to reach a consensus have led some to decry that the mystery of where Yiddish came from will never be solved. But now for the first time a pioneering tool that converts genome data into ancestral coordinates, is helping to pinpoint the DNA of Yiddish speakers.

In the largest genomic study of Ashkenazic Jews, and the first one to study Yiddish speakers, we applied our Geographic Population Structure (GPS) tool – which operates in a similar way to the sat nav in your car – to the genomes of more than 360 Yiddish and non-Yiddish speaking Ashkenazic Jews.

Author provided,



Surprisingly, our GPS honed in on north-east Turkey, where we found four primeval villages, one of which was abandoned in the mid-7th century AD.

These ancient villages identified by the GPS tool are clustered close to the Silk Road – the ancient network of trade routes – and are named Iskenaz, Eskenaz, Ashanaz, and Ashkuz. And it is likely that these are the villages that mark the location of the lost lands of Ashkenaz.

The history of a people

Located on the cross roads of ancient trade routes, this region suggests that the Yiddish language was developed by Iranian and Ashkenazic Jews as they traded on the Silk Road from the first centuries AD to around the 9th century when they arrived in Slavic lands.

Putting together evidence from linguistic, history, and genetics, we concluded that the ancient Ashkenazic Jews were merchants who developed Yiddish as a secret language – with 251 words for “buy” and “sell” – to maintain their monopoly. They were known to trade in everything from fur to slaves.

By the 8th century the words “Jew” and “merchant” were practically synonymous, and it was around this time that Ashkenazic Jews began relocating from ancient Ashkenaz to the Khazar Empire to expand their mercantile operations.

This Jewish migration led to some of the Turkic Khazar rulers and numerous eastern Slavs living within the Khazar Empire to convert to Judaism so they didn’t miss out on the lucrative Silk Road trade between Germany and China.

But the demise of Khazaria due to continued invasions and finally the Black Death devastated this last Jewish Empire of Khazaria. This led to the Ashkenazic Jews splitting into two groups – some remaining in the Caucasus and others migrating into eastern Europe and Germany.

The two groups still called themselves Ashkenazic Jews, however the name Ashkenaz became more strongly associated with Germany and the the European group – for whom Yiddish became their primary language.

A secret language

Since north-east Turkey is the only place in the world where the place names of Iskenaz, Eskenaz, Ashanaz, and Ashkuz exist this strongly implies that Yiddish was established around the first millennium at a time when Jewish traders moved goods from Asia to Europe. This was done by developing the language of Yiddish, which very few can speak or understand other than Jews.

Further evidence to the origin of Ashkenazic Jews can be found in many customs – such as the breaking of a glass at a wedding ceremony and placing stones over tombstones, which were probably introduced by Slavic converts to Judaism.

By studying the origin of Yiddish using our GPS technology, combined with a citizen science approach, we were able to shed light on one of the most forgotten chapters of history and demonstrate the use of bio-geographical genetic tools to study the origin of languages. For Ashkanazic Jews these are the ties that bind their history, culture, behaviour, and identity.

THE CONVERSATION

(Photo: Public Domain) (Photo: Public Domain) DNA of Yiddish speakers could have originated from four ancient villages in north-west Turkey.

This article was originally published in The Conversation. [Read the original here.](#)

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Burglary suspect turns out to be raccoon hiding under plant |

Fox News

PALM BAY, Fla. —

foxnews.com

Published May 19, 2016

Associated Press

Police officers responding to a burglary call at a property management office in central Florida found an unlikely culprit — a raccoon hiding behind a potted plant.

A concerned worker called 911 Wednesday morning after finding several ceiling tiles on the floor and papers strewn about the All Florida Properties office in Palm Bay.

Lt. Mike Bandish told Florida Today officers arrived at the office and began going room to room to find out why the office was in such disarray.

That's when they found the raccoon. They captured it with a catch pole and led it out of the office and into a wooded area behind the building.

Brevard County Animal Service workers searched the attic to see if more raccoons were in the building.

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Real estate heir accused of mutilating girlfriend in 'vampire' murder

nypost.com

By Sophia Rosenbaum

June 1, 2016 1:18pm

Blake Leibel (center) attends a party in LA in 2008. Photo: PatrickMcMullan.com

The heir to a Canadian real estate fortune pleaded not guilty to carving up his girlfriend and leaving her bloodless body behind in their West Hollywood apartment.

Struggling screenwriter Blake Leibel, the 35-year-old son of a Toronto tycoon, is facing the death penalty for the first-degree murder of his gal pal, Iana Kasian, who was found lifeless in their barricaded home.

"Kasian was tortured and mutilated before she was killed and all of her blood was drained from her body," prosecutor Tannaz Mokayef said after Tuesday's court appearance.

Los Angeles police busted through the door of their apartment, which was blocked by hand-built barricades, last Thursday after Kasian's mother reported her missing.

The 30-year-old Ukrainian woman, who has a young child with Leibel, showed signs of "sustained blunt force trauma" on her body, which was unresponsive when police arrived.

Leibel — who has written for various comic books, including "United Free Worlds," "Operation Redux" and "Moon Lake" — was arrested last week and taken out in handcuffs as neighbors looked on.

He also wrote for the "Spaceballs" animated series, and was working on a Fox comedy about marijuana legalization with Mark Wahlberg and Steven Levinson.

"He looked deranged. His legs were bruised. His face was puffy," one neighbor told The Toronto Star.

Leibel's lawyer claims he is suffering from mental health issues, prompting LA Judge Keith Schwartz to order a psych evaluation.

In recent years, Leibel has been reliant on his family's fortune — from his father's company, Canada Homes Inc. — and filed to be the sole beneficiary of his mother's will after she died from brain cancer in 2011.

"Blake needed money," documents from Ontario Superior Court said, according to The Star. "The evidence shows that both Lorne and Eleanor [Blake's parents] were sending him money to continue to live in California in a home that had also been provided by Eleanor's largesse."

He later got a hefty inheritance of \$1.7 million, which he received in monthly installments.

Just a week before Kasian's murder, Leibel was arrested for sexual assault and was released the same day after posting \$100,000 bail.

He was not eligible for bail for this case, and is set to be back in court June 14.

With Post wires

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The Truth About Real-Life Vampires

Apr 26, 2016 09:00 AM By Dana Dovey

medicaldaily.com

While the sexy and stylish vampires of HBO's *True Blood* might have been more than willing to "step out of the coffin" and make the world aware of their presence, in real life, people who regularly enjoy drinking blood prefer to stay in the shadows of obscurity. Despite their unique palate, however, the modern-day vampire has less in common with Bram Stoker's beloved *Dracula*, and is more like your average boy or girl next door — that is, if your neighbor also happens to enjoy drinking human blood.

A Mysterious Illness

Puberty is hard for everyone. From awkward hair growth to hormone-fueled crushes, Mother Nature leaves no teen unscathed. However, for a small amount of the general population — about 5,000 or so for every major U.S. city, according to *The Washington Post* — puberty comes with an additional twist: a thirst for drinking blood.

Like many of puberty's surprises, this need to feed is both uncontrollable and confusing. While this may sound strange, Dr. John Edgar Browning, a researcher at Georgia Institute of Technology who investigated the real vampire community in a 2015 study, explained that in most true vampires, it's far from supernatural.

"Its members are people who developed, usually during puberty, a sort of energy deficiency, and afterward found that if they consume blood they feel better," Browning told *Medical Daily*.

The compulsion to drink blood usually begins around puberty.

Browning explained that many modern-day vampires don't identify with the dark, gothic culture of stereotypical vampires. Instead, they believe they have a mysterious illness that requires them to drink blood. Without it, they become weak and crippled, often experiencing severe headaches and stomach cramps.

"It's not until later, often much later, that the term 'vampire' is adopted as a means of communicating their identity and to bring meaning both to their lives and to a bodily process they don't fully understand," said Browning.

To date, there is no medical proof or explanation for vampirism, although scientists have been fascinated by the practice for centuries. Renfield's Syndrome is the term used to define those with clinical vampirism, a distinct compulsion to drink blood, *The Huffington Post* reported. According to a 2011 paper on the condition, those with Renfield's Syndrome often have a childhood experience causing them to associate blood with excitement. During puberty, they may also come to associate this excitement with sexual arousal. However, Renfield's Syndrome is considered a psychiatric illness, not medical, and according to Browning is not the same as true vampirism as we understand it today.

In the past, doctors theorized that vampirism may be related to tuberculosis, seeing as TB patients often cough up blood, implying they had just digested it. Even as early as 2002,

researcher Nick Lane theorized that porphyria, a rare blood condition that also causes intense sensitivity to sunlight, may have inspired the tales of blood-thirsty creatures of the night.

Still, despite the lack of an empirical explanation, the symptoms are real enough for the sufferers.

"Without feeding the vampire will become lethargic, sickly, depressed, and often go through physical suffering or discomfort," self-proclaimed real vampire "Merticus" told *The Daily Beast*.

CJ!, another real vampire, told *the BBC* that she suffers from irritable bowels that can only be cured by "consuming a sizeable quantity, somewhere between seven shot glasses to even a cup" of blood.

What's more, Browning told *The Washington Post* that one vampire he interviewed even required hospitalization following a prolonged absence from her "medicine." It was only after her husband visited her in the hospital and gave her some of his blood that she was able to recover.

Most real-life vampires get their blood supply from willing donors in an ethical manner — any deviation from this would result in expulsion from the vampire community, Browning explained. Although many vampires have sought treatment or diagnosis from medical professionals, Browning said the outcome is always the same: "No condition or abnormality can be found."

Dr. DJ Williams, an associate professor of social work from Idaho State University who recently authored a 2014 study regarding real vampirism, told *Medical Daily* that vampires consider their condition very much real, regardless of what the rest of society thinks of them.

"From my experience, many vampires seem to think that there is likely an undiscovered genetic or medical explanation for their condition," said Williams. "'Real' vampires believe that they do not choose their condition. In other words, they report that they have a need for extra energy, which defines their vampiric identity."

Vampire believe that their need for blood is a true medical condition, despite no existing proof.

Harmless Habit Or Health Concern?

While drinking blood may seem like a perverse yet harmless habit, the practice carries a number of actual medical risks. First off, humans aren't meant to drink blood. While a blue steak every now and then isn't likely to do much harm, according to *Live Science*, blood can be toxic when consumed in large enough quantities.

Blood is rich in iron, which is why it has such a metallic taste. Although iron is an essential nutrient for our health, we aren't able to effectively get rid of excess iron if we accidentally have too much. If iron builds up in our bodies we can develop a condition called

haemochromatosis, which essentially causes a number of serious health conditions like liver damage, depression, dehydration, fluid in the lungs, and even death.

Not only is the blood itself potentially dangerous, but the pathogens it carries could also harm the real life vampire. HIV may be the illness most commonly associated with blood transmission, but it is by far not alone. According to the National Institutes of Health, blood can also carry Hepatitis B and C, and also a rare yet serious virus called Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease that is essentially the human version of Mad Cow Disease.

However, it seems that modern-day vampires understand these risks and have taken safeguards to protect their health. Firstly, Browning explained that most real life vampire and donor situations “generally both the donor and the vampire undergo first a blood test to safeguard against transmitting any pathogens.” In addition, Browning told *Medical Daily* that real life vampires usually consume far too little blood to cause them any serious harm.

“I, personally, have not met a New Orleans vampire who’s caused harm to him, or herself, by drinking too much blood, nor have I heard of this happening to anyone in the greater community.”

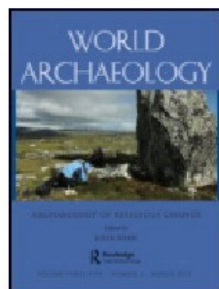
Despite these safeguards taken by the real vampire community, the medical needs of this demographic may still be overlooked by health professionals.

For his study, Williams interviewed several real vampires and found that many were uncomfortable sharing their blood drinking habits with their doctors due to the fear of being ridiculed and possibly diagnosed with a mental illness. According to Williams, being open about drinking blood is integral to real vampires’ physical and mental well-being.

“I think it is very important that doctors and clinicians are open to their clients’ diverse beliefs (including personal identities), meaningful experiences, and lifestyles,” Williams told *Medical Daily*. “The more open and nonjudgmental clinicians are, the more likely they can help their clients.”

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Reconsidering obstetric death and female fertility in Anglo-Saxon England

Duncan Sayer & Sam D. Dickinson

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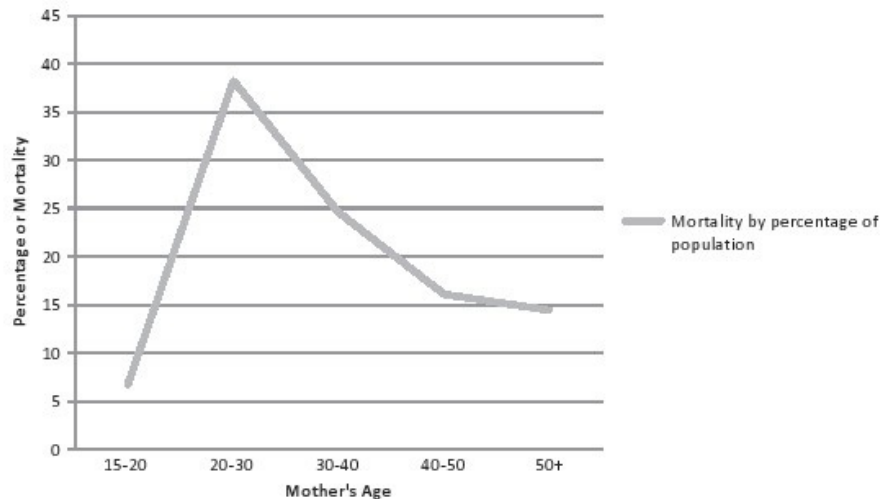


Figure 4 Mortuary profile for early Anglo-Saxon women, the graph shows age by decade against the percentage of mortality within that age group. The sample consisted of 374 female skeletons from 46 cemeteries (from Stoodley 1999, table 73).

years. However, these figures are not a reflection of life-span, which is better represented by survival statistics, but average mortality figures, which are useful when presented as a mortuary profile for age structuring (Chamberlin 2001, 2006: 28–38, 75, 90–1; Roberts 2009: 138).

Based on a more detailed study, Stoodley placed the average life expectancy of a woman at 30 (Stoodley 1999: 119). Interestingly, Stoodley also produced a mortality profile for women; one that shares the same pattern seen from India with a significant peak in the 20s (compare Fig. 3 and Fig. 4). The statistics are derived from skeletal data so suffer from a tendency to under-represent older individuals and ignores skeletons which could not be sexed (Stoodley 1999: 106). However, the results are conspicuous, placing over 38 per cent of Anglo-Saxon female mortality into a single decade of life, a trend unlikely to be the product solely of sampling error. A pattern this striking, like the Anantapur district case study, is likely to have maternal mortality as its dynamic factor. These figures suggest that the late 20s was the period in a woman's life when she was exposed to higher risk and had either her first or fifth (and further) child. The older women, Apple Down grave 174 and Lechlade grave 95, may have survived multiple births before succumbing to the risks of child bearing, but as a result we should consider the possibility that early Anglo-Saxon women married and had their children later than we might have expected, as was the case with later medieval women (Gilchrist 2012: 38–9).

Discussion

Everyone would have known someone who had, or would, die in childbirth. Given that reality, it is conspicuous that there are not more examples of double obstetric death in the archaeological record. However, the earliest Anglo-Saxon laws to survive witness controls placed over female fertility. The laws of Ethelbert (king of Kent AD 602–3) regulated sex with women and levied fines against men

for engaging in sex with a king's maiden, a grinding slave, a noble woman's serving-woman, a free man's serving-woman or a slave woman. They also regulated adultery, where a free man who lay with another free man's wife had to obtain a replacement. According to law 85, even a servant or slave was protected though compensation if a man lay with his wife. Laws 82 and 83 covered forced marriage and compensation for breach of betrothal and law 81 read: 'If she does not bear a child', indicating the importance of female fertility by placing the property of a childless widow into the hands of her paternal kinsmen (Whitelock 1979: 391–4). Although these are the laws of an early Christian king they are partly contemporary with the early Anglo-Saxon cemeteries and so the people interred within these places were the social agents who lived these written and cultural rules and their unwritten oral predecessors. The legal authority regulated a woman's sexual partnerships and placed emphasis on female fertility within identifiable biological lineages; adherence to these early laws was probably not enforceable but may have been cultural practice (Reynolds 2009). This system created a network of social rules, marriage restrictions and taboos which acted to control female fertility, placing emphasis on the mature body. The presence of an infant within the grave of an early Anglo-Saxon woman may not have acted as a talisman of her special or exotic status but as a symbol of her fertility, a powerful representation corresponding with inheritance strategies and family identities.

Conclusion

Death in childbirth was commonplace in Anglo-Saxon England but this does not mean that the double death of a mother and infant was not socially or emotionally difficult. Grave 57 at Oakington was a double obstetric calamity and resulted in a marginal burial location. However, this was not a universal response and women with foetuses in-utero were interred in subsidiary and central locations, with wealthy, modest and sparse sets of grave goods. Young infants were found alongside women aged 15–45+, the full range of female fertility. In all of the examples described: women did not manifest exotic pathologies, were not universally buried in marginal locations and did not exhibit the characteristics of special status, indeed, quite the opposite. Death in childbirth was a democratic tragedy affecting the whole social spectrum but the treatment of the individual was determined through local agency, the result of negotiations that took place within a particular funeral party during a specific set of chronological and social circumstances. The inclusion of an infant or foetus in the grave of a woman was a visually powerful statement aimed at the funerary party and provided testimony to female fertility nested within concepts of inheritance and identity.

Maternal mortality was far more common than Wells (1978) assumed. Post-mortem extrusion, however, is an extraordinary and implausible taphonomic process. Malpresentation, infection or blood loss will have caused the woman and foetus to die and, unfortunately, if a woman died the chances of a neonate surviving were limited. Past societies probably employed social mechanisms or cultural responses that reduced the risk of mortality. Childbirth at home, the presence of a 'midwife' or experienced person augmented deliberate planning of pregnancy through institutions like late marriage or cultural taboos. And, while it would be imprudent to consider the reproductive process as the primary agency behind marriage and sexual practice, cultural factors intersected with mortuary and fertility patterns to create demographic profiles and the archaeological traces of very human behaviours.

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Reconsidering obstetric death and female fertility in Anglo-Saxon England

Duncan Sayer and Sam D. Dickinson

Abstract

Little has been written about female fertility and maternal mortality from an archaeological perspective. Typically debates focus on the physical aspects of childbirth, ignoring an obvious truth: the biggest single cause of death for women was childbirth. Whether death took place as a result of mechanical malpresentation, infection or blood loss, the root cause was undeniable. In this article we argue that post-mortem extrusion is improbable and that young infants and women found buried together are likely to have died together. However, most deaths would not have been simultaneous and so we build on demographic data to conclude that the early Anglo-Saxons engaged institutions which controlled female sexuality. Late marriage, cultural and legal taboos and an emphasis on mature fertility acted to limit the probability of death; however, the risk to the individual was real and each funerary party was the agent that constructed death ways to manage loss.

Keywords

Taphonomy; coffin birth; maternal mortality; fertility; special burial.

Introduction

Our understanding of Anglo-Saxon burial practices has been revolutionized in the last decades, developing from an examination of artefact typologies and ethnicities into an established exploration of the social experience. In part this has grown out of an interest in mortuary archaeology, memory and deviant burial (Lucy 1999; Price 2010; Reynolds 2009; Williams 2006). In parallel, archaeological interpretation has developed sophisticated gender archaeologies investigating infant agency, life courses and the human experience (Crawford 2007; Gilchrist 2012). It is within this context that the discovery of a pregnant woman buried with a rich array of grave goods on the margins of a large early Anglo-Saxon cemetery provided new insights into female fertility, pregnancy and the life course (Sayer, Mortimer and Simpson 2011).



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Oakington is the site of an early Anglo-Saxon cemetery in Cambridgeshire (AD 450–700). Excavated in June 2011, grave 57 contained a woman with a descended foetus across her pelvic cavity, a position unlikely to result from post-mortem extrusion. She was aged between 25 and 30, had congenitally absent teeth and occupational wear on her hands and feet (Buikstra and Ubelaker 1994). She was buried supine in full dress with a cruciform brooch and two small long brooches. The foetus lay low and transverse across her pelvis, which was probably the cause of this double fatality (Fig. 1). Even today transverse lie pregnancy is a dangerous malpresentation for both mother and foetus, almost always resulting in Caesarean section (Simm 2007). There are other examples of women with *in situ* foetuses from Anglo-Saxon cemeteries. However, in archaeology the dominant interpretation for extruded and partially extruded foetuses is currently a phenomenon known as coffin birth: the post-mortem extrusion of a foetus into the grave (Lewis 2007: 35). The recognition that this taphonomic process is in fact improbable under burial conditions and that death from childbirth was a major cause of female mortality allows not only an appropriate interpretation of the mortuary context, but also an exploration of female fertility as a significant and embedded phase in the adult life course.

Calvin Wells was certain that the only way to identify death in childbirth was by direct association, where the foetus is found in the pelvic canal (Chadwick Hawkes and Wells 1975; Wells 1978). However, maternal mortality in the Middle Ages may have been the cause of up to 50 per cent of young female fatalities (Högberg et al. 1987) and is the cause of 30–40 per cent of deaths in the modern developing world, particularly where emphasis is placed on adolescent and early adult fertility (Marai Bhat 2002; Wilmot and Gemmill 2012). Building on this position, we will argue that examples of pelvic situated and extruded foetuses from Anglo-Saxon cemeteries were likely to have been caused by death in childbirth and also that neonates found in double graves may have been the result of maternal mortality because death does not have to result from mechanical means: infection, haemorrhage, sepsis and eclampsia can cause infant and female fatality up to forty-two days post-partum.



Figure 1 Skeleto 57 from Oakington; note the descended, transverse lie foetus in her pelvis. The white dotted line shows some of the *in situ* foetus.

Archaeology and maternal mortality

Post-mortem extrusion, it is speculated, takes place forty-eight to seventy-two hours after death because the formation of decomposition gases creates an increase in intra-abdominal pressure, causing the uterus to prolapse, resulting in post-mortem delivery (Smith 1955: 25). Coffin births have been described in modern forensic cases but not as the result of decomposition (Schulz, Püschel and Tsokos 2005). For example, in one fire-related death a foetus was found outside the mother's body, reportedly caused by the initial heating and subsequent shrinking of the uterine wall (Vennemann et al. 2008). Another case of coffin birth involved foetal expulsion after heroin overdose; labour had onset so the foetus was head down (Schulz, Püschel and Tsokos 2005; Vennemann et al. 2008). In this case the heroin may have induced the early stages of labour. The key diagnosis is the dilation of the cervical canal and for foetal extrusion to take place unaided a significant degree of dilation prompted by ante-mortem contractions is required. Plausibly uterine contractions could be 'caused by the onset of rigor mortis' (Schulz, Püschel and Tsokos 2005: 275); however, this is in fact an inhibiting factor because of the restriction of tissue. Relying on the decomposition process to create forward momentum also presents a problem. In an earthen grave the cadaver is surrounded by soil, around and on top of the stomach, pelvis and between the legs, a situation which would certainly prevent the extrusion of an intact, fully articulated foetus. As a result, the unusual taphonomic situation required for coffin birth may be restricted to coffin-like cavities. Other taphonomic processes are caused in the coffin environment because of the absence of soil. When neck ligaments are no longer robust a skull may move, nudged by water or gravity (Emory and Wooldridge 2011: 22). However, putrefaction takes longer than forty-eight to seventy-two hours and extrusion would have to overcome an un-dilated, un-plastic, cervical canal, while the foetus was itself decomposing. As a result, coffin birth would be extremely unlikely to occur within an archaeological burial even inside a coffin-like cavity.

Calvin Wells' conservative approach to maternal mortality derives from the certainty of identification (Chadwick Hawkes and Wells 1975; Wells 1978). At St Nicholas Shambles, a medieval site in London, he identified a woman with cephalo-pelvic disproportion; she died with the foetus lodged within the birth canal where it remained for burial (Wells 1978). However, female skeletons with a foetus within the pelvic cavity, birth canal or in obstruction between their legs are rare in the archaeological record (Lewis 2007: 34). But death because of childbirth was not rare in the past (Högberg et al. 1987). An infant who died singularly may have been placed inside the grave of a contemporary adult, as seen in post-medieval Anglican practice, and sometimes infants were passengers in the coffins of unrelated adults, as in two examples from St Pancras, London (Emory and Wooldridge 2011: 86; Roberts and Cox 2003: 255). These examples are from urban and early modern contexts; populations in pre-industrial, rural, family-based societies, like Anglo-Saxon England, were small and dispersed so deaths were less frequent and less likely to coincide: a situation which significantly increases the probability that a young infant and adult woman found in the same grave were associated.

Double obstetric calamity in early Anglo-Saxon England

At a superficial glance grave 57 at Oakington fits a recognized pattern of infant and woman double burial seen at other large early Anglo-Saxon cemeteries (Crawford 2007; Lee 2008). Lee identified a series of burials from Beckford, Barrington and Apple Down where women with

skeletal trauma, leprosy and swollen limb bones were buried with infants or near children. She argued that this presented a 'liminal' location, reserved for children and impaired individuals unable to carry out the duties of adults; both, she proposed, were the recipients of a diminished legal status (Lee 2008: 28–36). Crawford developed this position, suggesting that the physically impaired, rich females from Barrington and Castledyke were accompanied by infants to add value to the grave assemblages, and that those infants had no agency or value as bodies (Crawford 2007: 90). Unfortunately, these studies pick only specific burials. Indeed, when illustrating the association of children and disabled individuals, Lee described the burial of a child and woman with a 'terminal illness' from Flixborough (Lee 2008: 31). Both individuals are dead and so both suffered from terminal circumstances, as did the whole mortuary population; the prevalence of disabling and terminal conditions is unknowable, as is the effect of a 'terminal illness' on the individual lived experience (Wood, Milner and Harpending 1993). Grave 57 from Oakington may have been physically distinct but the skeletal evidence indicates that she was not diminished in her contribution to adult society and had worked enough to alter her body permanently: she had wear patterning on her teeth from working activities like chewing leather, occupation markers on her left distal metacarpus and squatting facets (which may be inherited). At Apple Down infants were not separated off into marginal zones but were located right in the heart of the cemetery, adjacent to the older individuals and the richest graves; the individuals with skeletal trauma were located throughout the cemetery (Fig. 2) (Down and Welch 1990). These infants were not dangerous or subsidiary burials but were core to the organization of the Apple Down mortuary population. As a result we must consider an alternative interpretation for the marginal presentation of grave 57 on the edge of the Oakington cemetery.

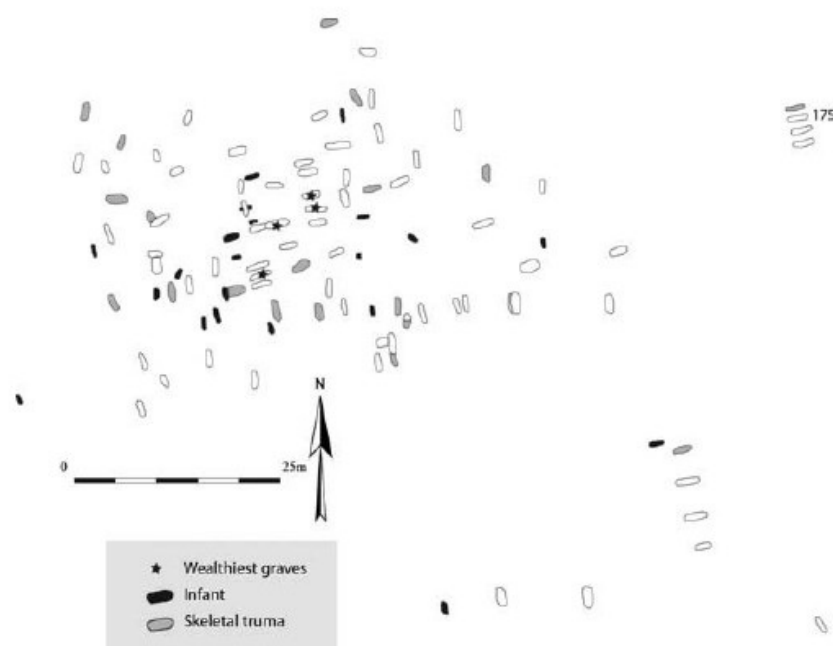


Figure 2 The Inhumation graves at Apple Down highlighting the wealthiest graves, infant graves and those which show evidence of skeletal trauma (excluding osteoarthritis) (after Down and Welch 1990, fig 2.4)

Early Anglo-Saxon cemeteries often include double graves comprising an infant and woman (Crawford 2007; Stoodley 2002) but many contain older infants and children who could not have died at birth (grave 18 from Barrington, Cambridgeshire, for example, contained a child aged 3 and an adult woman) so are not easily compared with grave 57 at Oakington (Malim and Hines 1998). However, there are a number of other burials with fetuses or neonates which are good cases for double obstetric deaths and parallel the Oakington grave.

In utero double burials

At Abingdon I, a pregnant woman aged 15–20 was interred on the edge of the cemetery, her grave including beads, a bucket and three brooches (Leeds and Harden 1936). As with the burial at Oakington, she was interred with a different orientation from the rest of the cemetery but among other furnished graves. Burial 110 from Dover, Buckland, included a wealthy female aged 20–30 with an undescended fetus, its head in the birth position. She was interred in the middle of the cemetery, surrounded by similarly seventh-century graves. No pathology was listed (Leeds and Harden 1936; Powers and Cullen 1987: 197–8). Apple Down grave 175 contained a fetus in the woman's pelvic cavity; she was 35–40, had osteoarthritis in her hip and was buried on the edge of the cemetery in a small group of unfurnished graves (Down and Welch 1990).

Great Chesterford 32 was the grave of a young woman aged 15–25 with the bones of a thirty-two-week fetus in her pelvis. She was buried flexed on her right-hand side with both knees drawn up. Her grave goods included an iron ring-headed pin, a knife and a nail (Evison 1994: 96). Grave 32 was located in a cluster of burials on the edge of a small plot of graves all oriented in the same south-north direction. She had Schmorl's Nodes affecting the eleventh and twelfth thoracic vertebrae and the second and third lumbar vertebrae. Schmorl's Nodes are a common spinal condition and may not be symptomatic but may have been caused by lifting and work (Waldron 1994: 58, 64). A second burial, 127, was of a moderately furnished female, aged 25–35, with a descended fetus lodged within her pelvis. She was buried with a knife, two disc brooches, an annular brooch mould, five beads, an iron pin and iron ring (Evison 1994: 109). The laminae on her fourth and fifth lumbar vertebrae were fused, a congenital anomaly, but her movement was probably unaffected (Waldron 1994: 58, 64).

At Castle Dyke, Barton-on-Humber, a female aged 35–40 carried in-utero a thirty-seven-week fetus, she was positioned in grave 146 with her right hand over her extended abdomen. The skull of the fetus; was on the left ilium in the birth position but was undescended. The excavator believed she was pregnant when buried and certainly the position of the arm and fetus imply this, even with the possibility that the fetus was placed on top of the woman during burial (Drinkall and Forman 1998: 77; Lewis 2007: 35). Burial 146 showed no evidence of pathology, was unfurnished and placed in a cluster of similar burials oriented south-north. Burial 147, of a male aged 45+, was deliberately placed over 146, on an east-west orientation, unusual for that area of the site.

Worthy Park grave 26 contained an 18–30-year-old female buried supine with a fetus between her thighs (Chadwick Hawkes and Granger 2003: 33). Grave 26 was unfurnished and positioned in a group of similar burials; the adult showed evidence of osteoarthritis on the base of her left first metatarsal, chiefly caused by trauma to the foot associated with carrying heavy weights, digging or ploughing (Wells 2003: 168). The Worthy Park grave has been described as an example of coffin birth (Lewis 2007: 36). However, this is unlikely because the fetus's body was extended, with a slightly bent neck, not a position that post-mortem exudation

could reproduce either within the soil or on an open grave base. More likely this foetus and mother died in childbirth and were interred together as one, foetus caught up in obstruction and laid out in the grave with its feet within the birth canal. This is not improbable and animals are occasionally found with a partially extruded foetus; a cow at Gussage All Saints was excavated with the front end of a calf still in its uterus (Wainwright 1979: fig. 109).

What is extraordinary in all of these Anglo-Saxon cases is that the foetus was left in position, a cultural choice not continued in the Middle Ages. The Council of Canterbury (AD 1236), the Council of Treves (AD 1310), and a fifteenth-century Augustinian canon required the unbaptized, unborn foetus to be cut out (Anderson and Parfitt 1998; Gilchrist and Slone 2005, 71) (ecclesiastical law may not, of course, describe actual behaviour and neonatal children were identified in Gilchrist and Slone's monastic sample (Gilchrist and Slone 2005)). However, with the discovery of a woman and in-utero foetus at the eighth-century Christian site, St Marys Road, Southampton, it seems this practice was not an Anglo-Saxon one (Garner 2011). Because separation was not the norm, examples of young infants in women's graves may also have been examples of maternal mortality.

Infant and woman double burials

The most common types of double burials are: child and woman (22 per cent), man and woman (19 per cent) and infant and woman (12 per cent) (Stoodley 2002). Stoodley argued that double burials may be amuletic, rather than of family members, and took place when two individuals died in close proximity. This theory was further explored by Crawford who suggested that infants are found in special burials, rich graves or the graves of the physically distinct, indicating they were human sacrifices (Crawford 2007: 89). Some adult burials may well be examples of sacrifice, but it is striking that, from the forty-six cemeteries Stoodley sampled, only one male was found buried with an infant, an exception which implies a strong connection between infant/adult double burial and female fertility. But this association need not be the result of human sacrifice because human fertility carries its own risk of mortality.

Infants are found in graves with women, but the best cases for double death may be with younger infants. As mentioned earlier, maternal mortality does not have to result from mechanical means and haemorrhage, sepsis and eclampsia can cause fatality up to forty-two days post-partum. An infection related to delivery or severe haemorrhaging could easily have killed a woman in Anglo-Saxon England. Similarly, newborns can develop infections and other conditions once outside the womb. As a result, many women found adjacent to young infants may be candidates for maternal mortality. Some examples have been found in large, well-excavated sites; for example, Barrington graves 13 and 84 contain a woman and an infant. Grave 13 was a rich burial with a cruciform brooch and two small long brooches, she had a new-born infant laid on her chest and shoulder, but as at Oakington, she was an outlier to the cemetery (Duhig 1998: 48). She was aged around 25 but showed no evidence of pathology. By contrast, grave 84 contained just a buckle and beads, she was located in the middle of the cemetery and her head was laid ('pillowed') on a new-born infant; she was aged between 25 and 35 and showed work-related pathologies: hyperplatymetric and Os acromiale (Duhig 1998: 77).

Similarly, Great Chesterford grave 2 contained a wealthy female adult (no further age given) with a great square-headed brooch, two saucer brooches and beads; she was on the edge of the cemetery and showed evidence of ante-mortem tooth loss, osteoarthritis and degenerative disc disease, the latter two of which may have been caused by work. The infant accompanying her

was 40 weeks and placed on her right side; they were both buried on the edge of the cemetery (Evison 1994: 190; Waldron 1994: 59).

At Lechlade there were three females with foetal or neonatal remains accompanying them. All were described as deaths in childbirth by the excavator (Harman and Jones 1998: 44). Grave 95 included a seven-month foetus found in post-excavation; if disarticulated during decomposition, this individual may have been recovered only when the grave soil was sieved. Grave 95 was wealthy, she was buried with a gold disc pendent, beads and a weaving baton, she was placed in the middle of a dispersed seventh-century plot. The woman was aged 35–40 and her twelfth thoracic vertebra had partially collapsed. Grave 188 contained a woman aged 25–30 located between three plots on the same orientation as the majority of graves, with no grave goods and no pathology. The foetus was new born, slightly premature and placed on her left-hand side (Boyle et al. 1998: 134). Grave 107 contained a newborn in a furnished but not rich grave on the left of an adult aged 25–30 and buried with a box, picks, spindle whorls and animal bones. She was found in the middle of the dispersed seventh-century plot with no pathology (Boyle et al. 1998).

There are two double graves from Worthy Park. Grave 18 is of a 20–25-year-old woman with an infant on her right-hand side. She had a slight roughening on some of her left tibia and was found in the middle of the site with a single bead (Chadwick Hawkes and Granger 2003: 25–6). The skeleton in grave 21 was aged 45+ and was found with a full-term foetus and a knife in the middle of the cemetery. The foetus was either laid on her breast or was inside her abdomen and her pelvis was largely missing, truncated by a later burial (Chadwick Hawkes and Granger 2003: 28). She showed some evidence of work-related pathology with osteochondral lesions on her feet, marks which may have been caused by repeated squatting and bending next to an upright loom (Wells 2003).

All of these women were aged between 15 and 45+, the full range of female fertility, with the majority in their 20s and 30s. They were buried on the edge or in the middle of cemeteries, with rich, mediocre or poor grave goods. Some, but not all, showed trauma but no exotic pathologies; occasionally they manifested minor congenital abnormalities. These were not special burials but women from the whole social spectrum, and women who worked. Funeral treatment varied from cemetery to cemetery and there was no universal reaction to double maternal mortality; each funeral party negotiated its own conclusion to their personal tragedy and they buried their women with infants in family cemeteries. Despite these examples, double fatalities were probably not the normal mode of death and foetuses were also buried individually and in multi-phased pits (Evison 1994: 31). Similarly an infant could survive its mother and, if they died separately, they were probably buried separately. As a result we will never know how many, or which, women died in childbirth but, as maternal death is a significant factor in patterns of female mortality, we may get an impression of its extent from comparative mortuary demographics.

Female fertility and mortuary statistics

Some 20 per cent of modern births present difficulty but death is not usually the result (Zhu et al. 2006). In 1990 the developed world had a maternal mortality of twenty-six in 100,000 compared to an average of 400 in 100,000 for the whole world. Ninety-nine per cent of all deaths resulting from maternity took place in the developing world and one

third of these in just two places, India and Nigeria (Wilmot and Gemmill 2012: 26). Maternal mortality is significantly higher in rural areas and in poorer communities, but these figures are not just related to geographic or economic situations where disease, diet and medicine are different from in the developed world. They are also the result of cultural circumstance, with complications in pregnancy as the highest cause of death among adolescent girls because of a preference for early fertility (Conde-Agudelo, Belizán and Lammers 2004; Patton et al. 2009).

From 570 obstetric deaths observed in a community-based study of rural Maharashtra, India, 71.9 per cent were the results of dystocia (Ganatra, Coyaji and Rao 1998). The highest probability of mortality was identified among women who were aged less than 20 with an increased risk after 35 years; the first and fifth (or further) pregnancies were the most dangerous. Not taking advantage of antenatal care, or delivery by an untrained attendant, also significantly increased the odds of death and living in a hamlet-sized (rather than village-sized) community nearly doubled the probability of mortality, although this may have been because of limited access to medical care (Ganatra, Coyaji and Rao 1998: 564). Furthermore, infant survival was diminished after maternal death (5.1 times) and the risk of infant mortality (in the first year of life) was twenty-eight times that of an infant with a living mother (Ganatra, Coyaji and Rao 1998: 565). In a second study looking at Anantapur district, India, 1073 deaths were identified, 867 in rural settings and 206 in an urban setting (Bhatia 1993). Bhatia also investigated the mortality rate by age (Fig. 3), showing an increase in the mortality of younger women due to pregnancy with a high of 31.6 per cent of deaths among those aged 20–24 years. Marai Bhat's (2002) survey of 36,993 Indian women also observed a high incidence of mortality among younger women, indicating that 40.2 per cent of deaths among woman aged 15–19 were caused by pregnancy.

To explore demographic questions in early British populations Brothwell investigated a selection of skeletal material and described the 'average lifespan' for adults in Neolithic to medieval populations, but he used small numbers and was not clear about his statistics (Brothwell 1972). He indicated that adult women had a lifespan of: Neolithic 28.3, Bronze Age 29.9, Iron Age 29.9, Saxon rural populations 33.1 and medieval rural populations 31.3

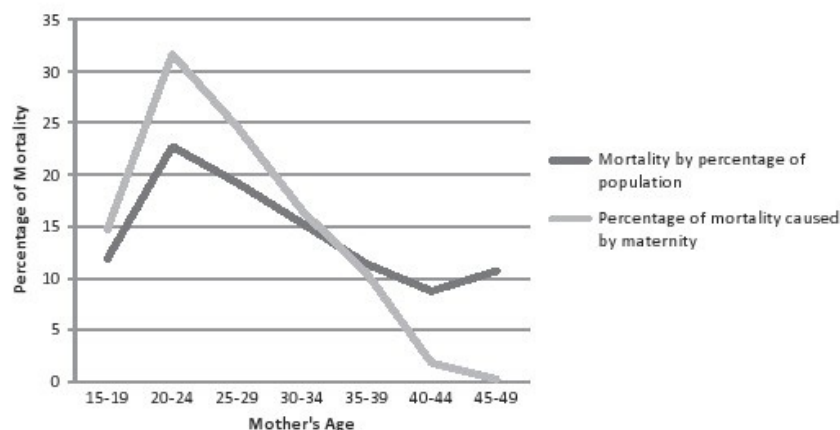


Figure 3 Maternal mortality verses mortality by percentage of population in Anantapur district, India (from Bhatia 1993: 313, table 1).

Historic renovation underway for Christ's tomb

2hr

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• Christians unify to repair ancient chamber

UPDATED 3:48 PM EDT Jun 07, 2016

JERUSALEM —A team of experts began a historic renovation at



the spot where Christians believe Jesus was buried, overcoming longstanding religious rivalries to carry out the first repairs at the site in over 200 years.

Historic renovations underway for Christ's tomb

The project, which began Monday, will focus on repairing, reinforcing and preserving the Edicule - the ancient chamber housing Jesus' tomb in Jerusalem's Church of the Holy Sepulchre. It is the first such work at the tomb since 1810, when the shrine was restored and given its current shape following a fire.

An ornate structure with hanging oil lamps, columns and oversize candlesticks, the Edicule was erected above the spot where Christian tradition says Jesus' body was anointed, wrapped in cloth and buried before his resurrection. It stands a few hundred meters (yards) from the site of Jesus' crucifixion.

The church, characterized by stone staircases, dark chambers and golden decorations, is one of Christianity's holiest shrines, but that hasn't stopped clerics from engaging in turf rivalries over the years.

Roman Catholics, Greek Orthodox and Armenians are responsible for maintaining separate sections of the church, and each denomination jealously guards its domain. While the clergymen who work and pray at the church generally get along, tensions can rise to the surface. In 2008, an argument between Greek Orthodox and Armenian monks erupted into a brawl.

This time, the clergymen have put aside their differences - a reflection of the dire need for the repairs. Last year, Israeli police briefly shut down the building after Israel's Antiquities Authority deemed it unsafe, prompting the Christian denominations to join

forces.

The three churches share possession of the shrine, holding prayer services at different times of the day and night, so restoring the Edicule was in everyone's interest.

"We equally decided the required renovation was necessary to be done, so we agreed upon it," said the Rev. Samuel Aghoyan, the top Armenian church official at the church.

Antonia Moropoulou, the scientific coordinator of the project, said the tomb is stable, but is warped and needs urgent attention after years of exposure to environmental factors like water, humidity and candle smoke.

"The marble and stone slabs have developed, due to the stresses, some deformations," said Moropoulou, an architect at the National Technical University of Athens, which is supervising the renovation. In addition, the structure needs to be protected from the risk of earthquake damage.

She said that even an iron cage around the Edicule, built by English authorities in 1947, cannot bear the stress. "So another solution is needed," she said.

The project will bolster the structure by, among other things, replacing the mortars and strengthening the columns. It is expected to take eight to 12 months, experts and church clerics said. During that time, pilgrims will be able to continue visiting the site, they said.

Some of the work is expected to take place early in the morning or late at night, when the church is closed. This quiet atmosphere will make it easier for experts to concentrate on the delicate task and help avoid disruptions for the thousands of pilgrims and tourists who visit each day.

The project will cost about \$3.3 million (3 million euros), said Theophilos III, the Greek-Orthodox patriarch of Jerusalem. Each church is contributing funds. In addition, Jordan's King Abdullah made a personal donation in April for the project. Jordan controlled Jerusalem's Old City until the 1967 Mideast war, and the kingdom continues to play a role safeguarding Muslim and Christian holy sites.

Despite the sometimes tense relations between the denominations, the tomb served as a potent symbol of Christian unity when Pope Francis and the spiritual leader of the world's Orthodox Christians, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I, prayed together there in May 2014.

Likewise, today's restoration is bridging centuries-old divisions by being conducted in the name of all three major denominations that share possession.

Besides the supervisory role played by the National Technical University of Athens, the

agreement also includes an architect from each denomination.

In a show of unity, on May 20 clerics from the three denominations posed and shook hands in front of the scaffolding erected around the tomb ahead of the work.

"What has happened is a very good sign, a sign of togetherness," said Theophilos III.

The church, one of the world's oldest, was built in 325 A.D. by the Roman Emperor Constantine. That structure was destroyed in 1009 by Muslim Caliph al-Hakim. A 12th-century restoration by the Crusaders gave the Holy Sepulchre its current appearance, while in 1808 a fire all but destroyed the Edicule.

In 1852, the Ottoman authorities then governing the Holy Land provided a framework for resolving disputes inside the church. They put into effect the "status quo," a set of historic laws and power-sharing arrangements that, to this day, rigidly regulates the denominations' activities inside the Holy Sepulchre.

The Rev. Athanasius Macora, a Franciscan monk who represents the Catholics at the inter-church commission that negotiates disputes at the Holy Sepulchre, said the renovation might have been more ambitious if not for the status quo.

"I personally would have liked to maybe contemplate some alternative to simply restoring the current structure, but because the status quo is so conservative in its nature. We had to more or less accept the fact that there would be no change whatsoever to the current structure, and it would be restored as it is now," he said.

Still, for pilgrims like Italian Claudio Pardini, the restoration is "an important sign" that all of the Christian churches are getting together to preserve their faith's traditions.

"It's good to take care of our churches so that we can leave the next generations a sign, something to visit. Because Christ isn't an idea," he said. "He's a story."

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Where New Yorker's Go For Rest & Relaxation in the 1840s & 50s? The Cemetery

stuffnobodycaresabout.com

Before There Was Central Park, There Was Green-Wood Cemetery



Greenwood Cemetery Bayside Ave. Fern Hill Mausoleums – print published 1855

While few New Yorker's today take Central Park for granted, there was a time in the city's history that open spaces where nature could be enjoyed unimpeded by noise and pollution were scarce.



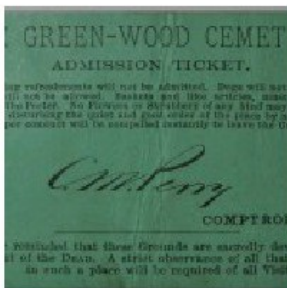
Greenwood Cemetery The Angels Await stereoview circa 1870

The great public parks which we enjoy today did not come into

existence until the late 1850's with the creation of Central Park followed by Brooklyn's Prospect Park in 1867. From the 1840s until the 1860s, the rural cemetery was *the place* to go if a New Yorker or visitor wanted to experience rolling hills, plains, lakes, fabulous artworks and stroll peacefully while contemplating life.

The oldest of these rural cemeteries in New York City is Brooklyn's Green-Wood Cemetery which was founded in 1838.

Green-Wood itself put out its own tour book soon after its creation to give visitors what they called "the tour."



Green-Wood Cemetery admission ticket 1886

What could you expect when you got there besides mausoleums and tombstones?

Nature in abundance.

To give you an idea of how popular it was to visit Green-Wood, this section of *Appleton's New York City and Vicinity Guide* by W. Williams, published by D. Appleton and Co. (1849) extols some of Green-wood's virtues:

Greenwood Cemetery is in the s. part of Brooklyn, at Gowanus, about three miles from the Fulton Ferry, at which place visitors take the stages, which leave hourly, for the Cemetery. Fare 12 cents. Another way to Greenwood is by the new ferry at Whitehall, which lands its passengers in the vicinity of the Cemetery, on a pier of great length jutting out from the shore: carriages run from the landing-place to the Cemetery, carrying passengers at a trifling charge.

This Cemetery was incorporated in 1838, and contains 242 acres of ground, about one-half of which is covered with wood of a natural growth. It originally contained 172 acres, but recently 70 more have been added by purchase, and brought within the enclosure.



*Night View From Green-Wood Cemetery 1881 by
Rudolph Cronau print Brooklyn Museum*

Free entrance is allowed to persons on foot during week-days, but on the Sabbath none but proprietors of lots and their families, and persons with them, are admitted; others than proprietors can obtain a permit for carriages on week-days. These grounds have a varied surface of hills, valleys, and plains. The elevations afford extensive views; that from Ocean Hill, near the western line, presents a wide range of the ocean, with a portion of Long Island. Battle Hill, in the N. W., commands an

extensive view of the cities of Brooklyn and New York, the Hudson river, the noble bay, and of New Jersey and Staten Island. From the other elevated grounds in the Cemetery there are fine prospects. Greenwood is traversed by winding avenues and paths, which afford visitors an opportunity of seeing this extensive Cemetery, if sufficient time is taken for the purpose. Several of the monuments, original in their design, are very beautiful, and cannot fail to attract the notice of strangers. Those of the Iowa Indian princess, Do-hum-me, and the "mad poet," McDonald Clarke, near the Sylvan "Water, are admirable.

Visitors by keeping the main avenue, called The Tour, as indicated by guide-boards, will obtain the best general view of the Cemetery, and will be able again to reach the entrance without difficulty. Unless this caution be observed, they may find themselves at a loss to discover their way out. By paying a little attention, however, to the grounds and guide-boards, they will soon be able to take other avenues, many of which pass through grounds of peculiar interest and beauty.

" In Greenwood, are quiet dells, nestling little lakes in their bosoms, shaded by locusts and willows from the sun, made cool by the sea breezes, and musical by the songs of birds; or you may loiter in a village of graves, as it were, with hundreds of visitors, like yourself, poring over sculptured tokens of affection,"



Green-Wood Cemetery relaxing near Silver Lake – stereoview circa 1870

These delightful grounds now attract much attention, and have already become a place of great resort, and they will continue yearly to attract additional crowds of visitors, as their beauties become more generally known, and the ties more extended that bind many in the surrounding country and neighboring cities, to the once-loved — not, to the eyes of Faith and Affection, dead, but sleeping — forms of those who lie in this beautiful resting-place of the departed.

Over the years Green-Wood Cemetery expanded to 478 acres. But after the opening of Central Park and Prospect Park, visits for leisurely strolls through the cemetery began to decline in popularity. Still, into the late 19th century the New York guide books still promoted Green-Wood, Cypress Hills, Woodlawn, Moravian, and the Evergreens as rural cemeteries to visit.



The view has changed somewhat. Green-Wood Cemetery 2014 photo – stuffnobodycaresabout.com

Today there are nearly 600,000 people interred at Green-Wood. Relatively few people visit with the exception of relatives of the deceased. That is a mistake, as Green-Wood remains a treasure that 99.9% of tourists fail to see and few New Yorker's even know about. The cemetery itself has changed since the 1849 tour book description, it is far more crowded with burials and some of the views have vanished with real estate development. But Green-Wood remains a serene place to visit, view sculpture, take in nature and contemplate life... and death.

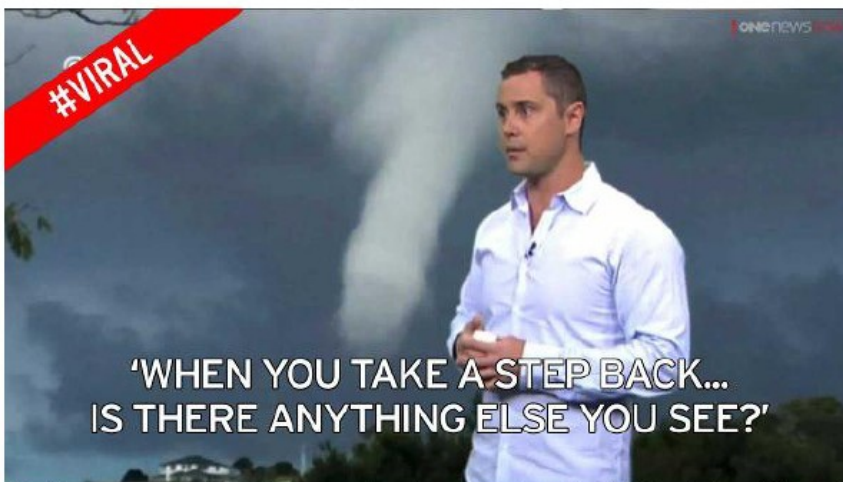
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Rudely-shaped cloud has breakfast TV presenters in hysterics

11:12, 3 Jun 2016 Updated 16:27, 3 Jun 2016 By Nicola Oakley

mirror.co.uk

Rudely-shaped cloud with 'a lot of detail' has breakfast TV presenters in fits of giggles



'Quite an amazing thing!': Suggestive cloud has breakfast TV studio in stitches of laughter

Scientists have said for a long time that humans are prone to spotting faces and other shapes in patterns and, most famously, clouds.

But while most people just see things like animals or people, one cloud formation in New Zealand has got people giggling like school children - because it bears more than a striking resemblance to male genitals.

Barbara Kendall posted a photo of the 'twister' to Twitter, saying she had a fright when she spotted it emerging from the sky on the way home from a yoga class.

"Needless to say, my calmness disappeared," she said.

The twister just popped out of the sky on the way home from yoga - needless to say my calmness disappeared pic.twitter.com/wMU0a1efgl

— Barbara Kendall (@BarbsKendall) June 1, 2016

New Zealand: Land of the Long White Penis-Cloud ;-)
<https://t.co/HaTLxity55>

— Tez Miller (@TezMillerOz) June 3, 2016

When it was picked up by a New Zealand news station, one cheeky weather presenter decided to point out the obvious.

After describing it as a water spout which had appeared over the country, he says to his colleagues: "Take a step back. Is there anything else you see in this picture?"

Twister spotted in the sky looks quite rude - news anchors can't stop laughing

One presenter berated him for drawing attention to it, saying: "You didn't have to say that. It's about as subtle as a sledgehammer, mate."

The other broke down into a fit of giggles when she noticed the picture, before Sam added: "There's a lot of detail!"



It probably had a few people spitting out their cornflakes.

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Russian family sit down to dinner with a 300lb BEAR at the table

dailymail.co.uk

Daily Mail

MailOnline US - news, sport, celebrity, science and health stories

Un-bear-lievable! Russian family sit down to dinner with a 300lb BEAR at the table

- Svetlana and Yuriy Panteleenko adopted the bear named Stepan when he was aged just three months
- Today the big mammal is 23 years old, weighs a whopping 300lb and stands at a height of more than 7ft
- Couple say Stepan is so domesticated he cuddles up to them in the evening and watches TV on the sofa
- The bear even helps out by watering the flowers but eats a hefty 25kg of fish, vegetables and eggs a day

By Jake Polden For Mailonline

Published: 04:27 EST, 29 May 2016 | Updated: 08:59 EST, 29 May 2016

The idea of sitting down for dinner with a 300lb bear is enough to put most people off their food.

But for one family from Russia this wild idea is actually a way of life that extends far beyond sharing the odd meal at the dinner table.

On the surface Svetlana and Yuriy Panteleenko appear like any other ordinary couple, but for their 23-year-old bear named Stepan.

Scroll down for video



he enjoys giving hugs

Surrogate child: Russian family Svetlana and Yuriy Panteleenko adopted the very large bear named Stepan aged three months

One of the family: Standing at more than seven foot, the large mammal has been domesticated by the couple and is now aged 23

Bear hug: The couple say that because they have known Stepan so long his temperament is extremely gentle and

Trust: The couple say the bear is so domesticated he even sits down with them in the



evenings to watch television on the sofa

Standing at more than seven foot, the large mammal is so domesticated the family often sit down together in the evenings to watch television.

And the bear has even been known to help out around the house - or at least in the garden - by watering the plants.

While Stepan gets through more than a bowl of porridge a day his favourite dish is a can of condensed milk thanks to a

sweet tooth.

- Heart-stopping moment four-year-old boy falls 12 feet into... How Ning Nong the elephant saved me from the tsunami: The... Roo close for comfort! Dramatic dashcam footage shows a...

He also stocks up on a hefty 25kg of fish, vegetables and eggs - meaning dinner time at the Panteleenko's is never a breeze.

But fortunately for Stepan, he's also a football fanatic so works off the gut-busting amount of food his parents serve him every day.

Svetlana and Yuriy adopted Stepan when he was aged just three months.

Who's been eating my porridge? The couple said Stepan, who eats a lot of food, gets through more than a bowl of porridge a day

What's for dessert? The big bear's favourite dish is a can of condensed milk thanks to a sweet tooth, but he also eats fish and vegetables

Active: Stephan is a football fan and works off the gut-busting amount of food his parents



serve him every day by having a kick about

Give us a hand! The bear has even been known to help out around the house - or at



least the garden - by watering the plants

The couple say that because they have known the bear so long his temperament is extremely gentle and he can often be found cuddling up to them on the sofa.

Svetlana said: 'Stepan likes nothing more than to cuddle up with us on the sofa at night while we're watching television.'



'When we adopted him, he was only three-months-old and had been found by hunters in the forest having lost his mother. He was in a very bad condition.'

'He absolutely loves people and is a really sociable bear - despite what people might think, he is not aggressive at all. We have never been bitten by Stepan.'

'He's got so many talents and loves a picnic. It's a wonder he doesn't eat us out of house and home.'

Hungry: Stepan stocks up on a hefty 25kg of fish, vegetables and eggs, meaning dinner time is never a breeze in the Panteleenko house

Budge up: The family say the bear can often be found cuddling up to them on the sofa while watching television of an evening



On your head: The couple said the bear, pictured playing football, is sociable, has never bitten them and likes nothing more than a hug

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This One Creepy Ghost Town In Maine Is The Stuff Nightmares Are Made Of

February 06, 2016

onlyinyourstate.com

<http://www.onlyinyourstate.com/maine/creepy-ghost-town-me-2/>



logo

To an outsider, Maine may simply be a beautiful state with idyllic coastline and delectable lobster. But, once you get to know us a bit better, you'll find that we have our fair share of strange "stuff."

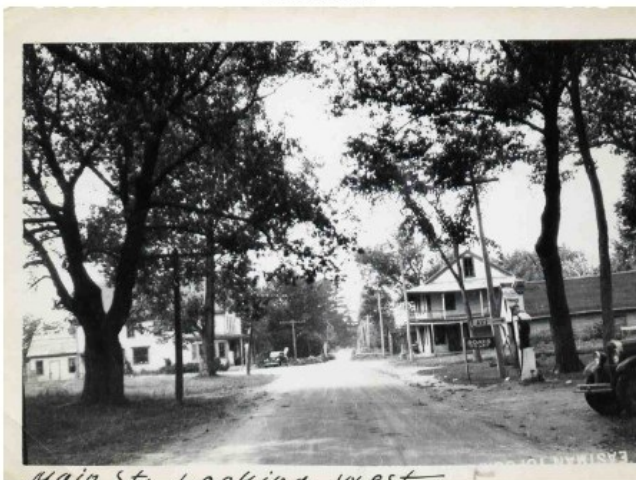
Between our many hauntings and downright wacky places to visit, Maine isn't always what it appears to be.

The perfect example? The real story behind Flagstaff Lake and what lies beneath its surface.



pfly / Flickr

Imagine building a life with family, friends and beautiful surroundings. Imagine sending your kids to school each day, knowing they're being raised in a community with strong values, good friendships and unwavering support. Now, imagine that one day you learn all of that will soon end. Not only are you being forced to leave your home, but all traces of your existence there will be erased. It's a nightmare. And it's one that the communities of Flagstaff Village and Dead River Plantation lived through in the early 1950s.



Main St. Looking West
Main Street of Flagstaff Village.

Dead River Area Historical Society
The first permanent settlers of Flagstaff Village, which took its name from the flagpole erected by Benedict Arnold and his men, came in the 1800s. Drawn by the rich soil found in the Dead River floodplain and timber resources, those who called the area home were rewarded with the eventual creation of a gristmill and sawmill. This led to additional settlement of the surrounding areas of Dead River and Bigelow Plantations. Life was not without hardship, but it was a beloved community. That is, until 1949.

In the mid-1900s, in an effort to consolidate Maine's electrical production, Walter Wyman of the Central Maine Power Company (CMP) began acquiring local power companies. Soon,



Dead River Area Historical Society / Facebook

CMP was building hydroelectric dams in Maine. To continue and expand, Wyman recognized the need to build a dam that would control the waters of the Kennebec River. This plan would only be approved by Maine legislature if he agreed to lease the land that was to be in the flood zone. Wyman wasn't interested in that expense. But he WAS interested in a plan that put



Dead River Area Historical Society / Facebook

Flagstaff Village and Dead River Plantation in the way of ultimate destruction. This plan meant the construction of a dam in the Dead River at Long Falls. By 1930, CMP was buying land from Flagstaff Village and Dead River Plantation. By 1948, the land was cleared. By 1949 it was burning, smoke billowing for miles.



In 1950, Long Falls Dam was built and lives were forever changed.

Dead River Area Historical Society / Facebook

Dead River Area Historical Society

Many of the town's important buildings, such as the schoolhouse, were demolished, while some of the lucky ones were moved. But, the most unfortunate of cases were the folks that never came to a monetary agreement with CMP. These homes simply remained, waiting for the incoming flood waters to overcome them.

In July of 1949, the town of Flagstaff Village had one last hoorah. In a two-day event that brought out 300 people, local folks somberly remembered all that had been built – family, community and love – over the last century. During the celebration, the clearing fires blazed sending smoke above the town revelers. It was surely an unnecessary reminder of what was to come.

Most residents relocated to the nearby areas of Eustis and Stratton. But, their families have



Above is the home of Mae Savage.
Below is what became of her home
when the diverted waters of the
Dead River overtook it.

Maine Village About to Die Has Farewell Celebration

FLAGSTAFF, Me. July 3 (AP)—This tiny village, doomed to disappear beneath the waters of a man-made lake, re-lived its historic past today.

The occasion: opening of "Old Home Days," a two-day community farewell that brought 300 residents back for a last look at the old home town.

Simply, sorrowfully they talked of the past—by common consent little was said of the future—with the 23 families still clinging to their homes here.

All around them was a treeless forest. Acres of stumps mark the area to be flooded by a Central Maine Power Company dam now under construction.

Over the village hung a pall of smoke from burning brush cut by the woodsmen clearing the flowage. For the most part, it was just a

reunion of relatives, neighbors and friends.

They told the old stories. How Benedict Arnold, marching through the wilderness to Quebec, planted the flagstaff that gave the community its name. And how an old trapper found that staff and replaced it. And how there's always been a flagstaff on the site.

Someone asked what would become of the staff that's there now. There was a moment of silence. Then Postmaster Evan Leavitt spoke up.

"Why not leave it there? It will come above the water. Let it be a marker for the town."

How long the last 23 families will be able to stay still is undetermined. The dam the power company is building is to add to its water storage system may be completed by Fall. But the company may not flood the area until the Spring runoff in 1954.

Kingfield Historical Society via Dead River Area Historical Society / Facebook

not forgotten about the town their loved ones once called home. The Dead River Area Historical Society does an incredible job creating events and curating collections to ensure that these lost communities are not forgotten. Visit them on Facebook for an incredible collection of photos and information.

Today, Flagstaff Lake offers



Graham Baker / Flickr

a respite from busy days in Maine. But, below are the fading foundations and reminders of a community that flourished. There was a time when some even reported finding relics, such as cutlery, of days

gone by near the shores. The next time you visit, take a moment to remember your past and those whose past lies beneath the surface of Flagstaff Lake.

Now that you know the story, listen to this musical rendition of what happened in the song "Below" by Slaid Cleaves.

Did you grow up in Flagstaff Village or Dead River Plantation? We'd love to hear your story! Or, have you been to Flagstaff Lake? Does knowing the story change how you feel about it?

Michelle

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Satanic Ritual In Switzerland? World's Longest Tunnel Opens With Bizarre Ceremony [Video]

inquisitr.com



June 3, 2016

**Satanic Ritual In
Switzerland? World's
Longest Tunnel Opens
With Bizarre Ceremony
[Video]**

Patricia Ramirez

*satanic ritual switzerland*

The Gotthard Base Tunnel has opened in Switzerland, and its inaugural ceremony was bizarre enough to have many conspiracy theorists calling it a satanic ritual. After 17-years of construction, which included extensive boring deep below the Swiss Alps, the world's longest tunnel officially opened

on Wednesday, reports *CNN*.

The completion of the project, which had been labeled "Switzerland's construction of the century," was marked by an unusual performance that is being called a satanic ritual in Switzerland and has the internet buzzing.

The unbelievably strange Swiss ceremony was attended by a plethora of European leaders. Included among the guests were French President Francois Hollande, Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, and the President of Switzerland Johann Schneider-Ammann. The world leaders were treated to the first official journey through the tunnel. Then they were treated to a satanic celebration of the tunnel's completion.

Check out the ceremony that was performed to celebrate the completion of Switzerland's Gotthard Base Tunnel.

As *TruNews* reports, the ceremony was separated into two different events, and who got to attend which depended upon their elite status or lack thereof. Outside of the tunnel, the so-called satanic ritual was attended by thousands who had come to celebrate the completion of Switzerland's record-breaking tunnel. Inside, elite dignitaries watched the alleged bizarre satanic ritual unfold.

Both events, inside and outside of the tunnel, featured performances that were "laced with graphic demonic symbolism" and broadcast live around the world.

The opening ceremony for the Swiss tunnel was really, really, really weird.
<https://t.co/gMrxmY3Vab>

— Roland Hughes (@hughesroland) June 1, 2016

The indoor ceremony was imagined and coordinated by Volker Hesse, a German director.

While many people across the globe have expressed concern and even disgust for what they saw as Switzerland's public satanic ritual, the odd ceremony was dubbed by the *BBC* as nothing more than a "lavish performance" that was intended to be a representation of an array of aspects the culture in Switzerland.

Right after Underground World News, I will be decoding the Gotthard Base Tunnel Satanic Ceremony on Enterthe5t4rz <https://t.co/X9rdIW8617>

— Enterthe5t4rz (@Enterthe5t4rz) June 3, 2016

@JanieBlakely Weirdest thing ever!

— Deirdre (@Deir_in_DC) June 2, 2016

Giant Swiss \$12 bn tunnel opens: ceremony w/Merkel has satanic demons, lesbians, and Illuminati zombies marching <https://t.co/0uXpyGTGjM>

— John de Nugent (@johndenugentESA) June 3, 2016

Overall, the ceremony that so many are now calling Switzerland's satanic ritual cost almost \$9 million and involved the 600 performing artists including dancers, actors and acrobats.

The ceremony began with a bunch of miners in orange jump suits doing a zombie walk toward a facsimile of the tunnel's entrance, which was being projected on a video screen.

The world's longest rail tunnel has opened in Switzerland with an elaborate and flamboyant ceremony. #7News <https://t.co/SJ2uNKUexo>

— 7 News Adelaide (@7NewsAdelaide) June 2, 2016

Then the miners were "sacrificed to the tunnel."

They re-emerged as "spirits," dressed in nothing more than underwear and veils. That's when things got really weird, and for some people became satanic. At this point, an actor dressed as a goat showed up in the midst of the performance and began "ritualistically consuming and mating with" the dancers.

The ritual in Switzerland continued with a depiction of a pagan ceremony in which actors planted trees on their heads while the goat man laid on the floor. During this portion of the ritual, the performance artists chanted a song in both Italian and ancient Germanic.

Aaaaand what they're watching. Swiss tunnel ceremony naturally includes

diapered, chained owl person. As you would. pic.twitter.com/CcU2L2fNcX

— Deirdre (@Deir_in_DC) June 1, 2016

At the end of the performance in Switzerland, the goat man is resurrected and worshiped by the dancers; at this point, many of the dancers were attired in gender-bending clothes, as drifter and/or as “women of the night.”

Many people were especially distressed by the beginning of what they saw as the satanic ritual in Switzerland, because the construction of the tunnel actually cost nine workers their lives. The workers, four from Germany, three from Italy, and one each from South Africa and Austria, have been memorialized in on a plaque displayed near the northernmost end of Switzerland's new tunnel.

The imagery used in the ritual in Switzerland was so extreme that when the *BBC* did a photojournalism piece on the ceremony, it had to include a disclaimer. Never mind that the ritual was broadcast live as it took place.

@hughesroland "Warning: This article contains explicit images" Not what I was expecting from the opening of a transport link!

— William Edwards (@willedwards) June 1, 2016

The new tunnel in Switzerland has opened up a high-speed rail link underneath the Swiss Alps, effectively connecting northern and southern Europe more conveniently and efficiently than ever before. The tunnel stretches a record-breaking 35 miles.

There has been no word from the world leaders who attended the opening ceremony in Switzerland regarding whether they believe they witnessed a satanic ritual.

What do you think? Was the Gotthard Base Tunnel's opening ceremony appropriate? Was it just a bizarre, even inexplicable performance art piece? Or was it truly a satanic ritual in Switzerland?

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New World Order uses satanic ritual to unveil Gotthard Train Tunnel

trunews.com



By Edward Szall on June 3, 2016

(TRUNews) On June 1st
Switzerland unveiled the world's

longest and deepest railroad tunnel with a deeply occultic, satanic ceremony.

At the Gotthard Train Tunnel's northern portal in Erstfeld, Switzerland, hundreds of dignitaries including Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi, Switzerland's President Johann Schneider-Ammann, Germany's Chancellor Angela Merkel and France's President Francois Hollande attended the Illuminati-esq ceremony.

The Gotthard ritual was split into 2 separate events, one for elite dignitaries inside the tunnel and the other outside in Erstfeld for the thousands of public attendees. Both were laced with graphic demonic symbolism, and broadcast live across the world through RT, BBC and other major European outlets.

The indoor ceremony followed a similar, yet scaled down version, of the outdoor Erstfeld ritual, and was coordinated by German director Volker Hesse.

The ritual, dubbed by BBC as a "lavish performance" was originally intended to represent various aspects of Swiss culture. It included 600 dancers, acrobats and dramatic actors and cost €8 million (\$8.9m). The performance began with a cohort of miners dressed in orange jump suits, marching like zombies toward the tunnels entrance (depicted on a video screen). The miners were then seemingly sacrificed to the tunnel and emerged as veiled spirits (represented by dancers in underwear with white wedding veils), and an actor dressed as a goat sprung out and began ritualistically consuming and mating with the veiled dancers. During this segment a headshot of the actor dressed as a goat was displayed on the video screen with a black and red backdrop and an absorbing fire lofting around his face, while three Egyptian scarabs floated in front of the screen. The next scene shifted to pagan druid ceremony, with the actors now draped in black subdued clothing and adorning nests, plants and trees on their heads. As the goat man laid on the floor an upside down tree was displayed on the video screen and the actors chanted a song in a mix of Ancient Germanic and Italian. The ceremony ends with the goat man being resurrected and worshipped as he is introduced to technology, industry and modern society — with many of the actors clothed as cross dressers, drifters and harlots.

The beginning portion, with the miners being sacrificed to the tunnel, is especially eery, because nine workers —four Germans, three Italians, and one each came from South Africa and Austria — died in accidents while the tunnel was under construction. Swiss media reported that their deaths are commemorated by a plaque near the northern end of the tunnel.

HISTORY

According to the Swiss rail service, it also took 43,800 hours of non-stop work by 125 laborers rotating in three shifts to lay the tunnel's slab track. The rough design for a rail tunnel under the Gotthard Pass was first sketched by Swiss engineer Carl Eduard Gruner in 1947.

But bureaucratic delays, concerns over the cost and other hurdles pushed back the start of construction until 1999. The work took 17 years at a cost of more than 12 billion Swiss francs (\$16.78 billion). According to the Swiss federal railway service the number of daily rail passengers is expected to increase from the current rate of 9,000 people to 15,000 by 2020, 5,475,000 yearly. About 260 freight trains and 65 passenger trains will pass through the tunnel each day, amounting to 94,900 freight trains 23,725 passenger trains yearly.

— This article will be updated with more information, and a video of the event —



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Why would vampires be incapable of entering a non-vampire human's house uninvited?

stackexchange.com

<http://worldbuilding.stackexchange.com/questions/39842/why-would-vampires-be-incapable-of-entering-a-non-vampire-human-s-house-uninvite>

I'm looking for a scientific explanation as to why vampires would be incapable of entering a human's house uninvited.

There have been many terrific scientific explanations for some of the most interesting vampiric traits over the years, but this is one that I'm unable to find (Google, Stack Exchange). In my world there's the beginning of a vampire society, and some vampire resistance to sunlight, so I'm interested in other ways of hindering these otherwise super-powerful blood-suckers.

In a bunch of classical stories, vampires do have this limitation that prevents them from entering a decent folk's house without an express invitation. They hang out in the doorway, looking all innocent and politely asking if they may come in. If the good but foolish virgin/elderly/child says "Do come in, what can possibly go wrong" - vamp goes in, blood comes out.

This limitation is usually attributed to a measure of holiness (sanctity of a place of residence) vs. the vampire's unholiness, or a magical physical prevention trick. In one short story, I recall that the vampire was unable to enter a shabby hovel before being invited, even when pushed into the entrance by a powerful ogre.

But I'm looking for a scientifically (can be soft science) explained vampire, such as in these neat questions and answers:

How much blood does a vampire need?

Plausible explanation for lack of reflection in a mirror.

I was thinking about a psychological disability, but psychology is shifty and can be changed. Then I thought of a selective force field, but those can be hacked/alterd. I really would like to have a physical, improbable to alter reason for a vampire to grind their teeth and be unable to take an extra step into my residence.

(enter virgin/elderly/child voice here:) Help! Scientific heeelp!

Apr 12 at 6:41
1,181,1517

The problem with any physical force that prevents the vampire from entering is this: How does it suddenly stop working when some person speaks a few words? If Divine Power is out, Psychology is your best bet. – Cyrus Apr 12 at 7:17

I'm looking for a scientific explanation - perhaps you should rephrase as a *science fiction explanation*, since the iterative process of observation and analysis is not possible for fictional settings. – user1717828 Apr 12 at 13:02

I always thought it was a CLASS thing - as if breaking and entering was beneath them. Vampires = classy, zombies = gauche. – Hannover Fist Apr 12 at 20:00

This answer worldbuilding.stackexchange.com/a/7119/592 from one of the linked questions also covers this question. – Sumyrda Apr 12 at 20:32

My fiancée, her father and grandmother are vampires. I can test every science based idea you get, no problem :) – Jan 'splite' K. Apr 15 at 13:47

73

This is an interesting idea, but it misses an explanation for why inviting a vampire in would suddenly allow them to come in. – Amani Kilumanga Apr 14 at 1:17

Why do vampires have to be invited in? –SciFi.SE

It depends on what vampire literature your reading.

(below is my deleted answer to the linked question)

The fifth tradition: The Hospitality

Honor one another's domain.

When thou comest to a foreign city, thou shall present thyself to the one who ruleth there.

Without the word of acceptance, thou art nothing.

whitewolf.wikia.com

Greece is one of the oldest sources for the contemporary vampire legend. It produced the first modern writer on vampires, Leone Allacci, in 1645.

Xenia is the Greek relationship between two people from different regions. [Hospitality] allowed for the members of the relationship to safely travel into the other member's territory and receive a place to stay and **something to eat**. -The Value of Hospitality

It's the same reason Highlanders don't fight in church. It's not that they can't, they just don't. Conduct is very important when you're immortal.

So, entering one's house without permission is a faux pas that they won't commit, but they'll murder the same person? Vampires have a very strange definition of "polite". – phantom42

The host is honor-bound to sustain (feed) you once you're invited in. Proper guests do not disrespect their host by declining dinner, thief, nor break and enter.

My point is that once you invite them in (they can't break and enter anymore), it's no longer murder and they can no longer thief the sustenance they need from you, as it has been freely and automatically offered up due to the standard protocol of hospitality.

"Welcome to my humble abode," is the equivalent of signing the dotted line on a contract with the devil.

Apr 12 at 21:29

Mazura

80018

My two cents: Vampires are politicians/salesmen. Yes, in the concept of world building one needs to accommodate the physical nonsense of vampirism such as how much blood is needed for a vampire to live, where they sleep, what kind of capes they wear and all that superficial bullshit.

But looking at the historic presentation of vampirism over the ages, all of the behavior comes off as classic "wolf in sheep's clothing" politician/salesman behavior. And if you think about the value of legends and myths in a society, it's fairly easy to see someone describing a politician/salesman as someone who is a "monster" that "promises you everything but sucks you dry" has a "insatiable appetite."

Yes, there are some politicians/salesmen that use bullying tactics and brute force to get what they want. But are they more or less common than politicians/salesmen that convince their next "victim" (aka: client,

market, constituent, sucker, etc...) that they want what they are selling? And in general in life, isn't it easier to get someone to do something for you as long as you consider it's being done in their own best interest?

If a vampires hungry, just go and attack some schlub at a tavern, drain him dry and leave his corpse for the rats. But you want to recruit a new vampire for your army of underlings? Befriend them... Seduce them... Promise them eternal life... Let them live forever! As not only a monster, but a slave to a larger monster... They'll get what they wished for and much, much more!

Apr 14 at 5:43
JakeGould
1435

It could be a spiritual obstacle, since vampires are creatures of pure 'evil' and a home is a place of spiritual strength and warmth. Once the owner gives permission for 'evil' to enter the home, the spiritual lock is broken. Similarly the vampire reaction to the crucifix is an extreme reaction of a pure 'evil' being to an object holding strong powers of 'good'.

answered Apr 12 at 19:11
Julio
1

Hmm, so maybe only a home with a hearth (fireplace) will keep them out. That could be interesting to figure out how/why vampires start getting into more modern homes! – JDułogosz Apr 12 at 19:21

Several authors have said that their vampires have a problem because of the innate power true homes acquire over time. This leads to the implication that the less time you spend in the home, the less power in its domain it has. In fact, Jim Butcher shows a demon trying to get into his home and notes that the power of his home would hold off the demon for a little while but not forever.

Apr 13 at 0:18
dsatow
1

Vulnerability: The vampire needs the invitation for its own protection.

(Admittedly, this idea sprang to mind after seeing some of the options listed by Liesmith's answer.)

It could be that humans leave behind some sort of evidence of their residence; either a scent, or something similar that supernatural beings can detect with a sense we don't. However, just as the substance of oxytocin is claimed to affect trust and hormones are a real physical trait that impact people's emotions, this is sort of the same concept (possibly going in a reverse direction) -- the real physical acts of letting down one's guard and entrusting a person cause a physical impact on the world. Humans are not quite so affected by the resulting aura, but a supernatural creature does benefit.

Sleep tends to cause one of the ingredients in the air (which might combine with some other ingredients to cause the barrier), so places like homes and hotel rooms are saturated with a protective element that you don't find in a sports arena or a grocery store.

This might be combined with Liesmith's concept of Legal impact. The idea of the "legal" threat could come from peers like he mentioned, or some other supernatural power. Perhaps vampires know that their actions, considered horrendous by the victim species known as humans, are actually condoned by divine ruling. The vampires know that their actions will be traceable, because biting a human will leave a residue which is easily traceable using supernatural methods (or even a method that a natural being can use, if they have the supernatural equipment and/or know-how), so the vamp cannot effectively deny being in the presence of the human.

Alternatively, instead of a legal threat from another species, the chemicals in the air could reduce the vampire's strength or increase its mortality, so that even a child could kill a vampire. (This might be caused by a side effect; if the vampire violates the supernatural law, not only is he weaker than a child, but the resulting air chemical is likely to cause intense hatred within the human, causing an otherwise-normally-peaceful human to want to kill any supernatural creature, even if the human doesn't rationally know that the creature is supernatural. Such a setup might be useful for one vampire who exploits the rules to get another vampire in trouble. By violating the rules, he causes another nearby vampire to be detected as the vulnerable recipient of lethal hate.)

Apr 13 at 11:53
TOOGAM
2512

This is the result of a blood pact with humans.

A long time ago, so much that noone but a few of us remember it, when vampires (and humans!) were young, there was a fierce war amongst the two races. It ended with the *Peace of the resting places*, and one of its most important provisions was that vampires would no longer enter into a human home (unless invited to do so).

(It also forbid humans from killing a vampire during the day, but they were not so constrained by the Pact and breached it)

The tales of humankind tell that they had powerful wizards amongst their side, that led them to the victory, and —after vampires surrendered— imposed such spell upon them.

The informed reader will immediately recognise this as pure fantasy. There's no way the human forces (already quite weakened after the many deaths *just for fun* by some irresponsible vampires, which ultimately led to the cities joining against us in such war) could have defeated the vampire army. And even if such thing could have occurred, it would have been a very stupid move, should they have held such power. The complete annihilation of vampires —which was their original goal— would have been a more sensible move. Or had it resort to such "magic" prohibition, not killing any human or banning entrance to any city would have been much wiser restrictions.

Truth to be told, vampires could have easily wiped out all the humans. In fact, the problem was that they *would* have wiped out all the humans. Leading to starvation of (most) vampires on the upcoming winter. Presenting the result as a defeat, ending with this "peace treaty" was a genius movement by our leader:

- it made people felt secure and diminished their motivation to fight back
- rebellious vampires would not be able to indiscriminately kill food, as it would be safely stored at their homes
- at the same time that it only provides a weak protection from us to human beings

not to mention some other perks that human agreed to provide us as tribute :)

Update:

The assumptions here are that

- A vampire can't break a blood pact
- Due to their vampiric nature, blood pacts are transitive. You are affected by those affecting the vampire that *converted* you. As this event happened in the early beginning, it affects pretty much to all the vampire community (but leaves room for having a few vampires immune to it).

Apr 12 at 22:12

Ángel

36016

While this gives a rational for "why" it doesn't explain the "how". A just how would a curse achieve the goal of stopping vampires entering uninvited. (Note that this is looking for science based vampires, not magical fantasy ones). – Tim B♦ Apr 15 at 11:43

@TimB I have updated it expanding a bit the assumptions – Ángel Apr 15 at 13:53

protected by Serban Tanasa♦ Apr 14 at 18:22

Thank you for your interest in this question. Because it has attracted low-quality or spam answers that had to be removed, posting an answer now requires 10 reputation on this site (the association bonus does not count).

Would you like to answer one of these unanswered questions instead?

Not the answer you're looking for? Browse other questions tagged science-based biology vampires or ask your own question.

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rev 2016.6.1.3629

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19 Answers 19

I think you can approach it from three different avenues, depending on the tone of your setting:

Psychological: Perhaps the root cause of vampirism in this world (such as a virus), inflicts an extreme form of OCD, hardwired into the vampire's brain. The vampire would be *physically* capable of entering someone's home, but they'd have an extreme, irrational aversion to doing so without an invitation.

The hardwired OCD could be a side-effect of one of the benefits of vampirism: ie, the same neurological change which allows superhuman senses/reflexes could cause this specific type of extreme OCD.

Physical: If you need the barrier to be *physical*, then I think the best bet would be a form of psychic influence. Similar to the psychological option, this could be explained as an unfortunate side effect of one of the vampire's powers.

For example, if the vampires in this world have the ability to perform mild mind-control, then their ability to "transmit" thoughts could also leave them vulnerable to the uncontrolled psychic emanations of humans.

A human in their own home would have a sense of psychic safety and confidence in their surroundings-- this causes a strong psychic field which prevents the vampire from breaching the boundary of the home.

When the human invites the vampire, they weaken their psychic defenses and allow the vampire to approach.

The benefit of this method is that it could also explain the effect of holy symbolism on vampires: someone with sufficient faith would essentially have a powerful psychic field around themselves at all times. This field could cause severe injury to a vampire who got too close.

Legal: I think this would be the weakest option, but it may fit in with the nascent vampire society mentioned in the original question. Vampires would have no physical block against entering a human's home, but the law of vampire society may strictly forbid such trespass (possibly due to an ancient treaty with humans?).

In this case, any vampire who violated the law would be viewed as the lowest form of criminal by their peers, and subject to execution, and possibly other harsh punishments beforehand.

This option would work best if the vampires in this world do not need to kill to feed, so any vampire who breaks into a human's home to attack them would be considered a criminal to begin with.

answered Apr 12 at 8:38
2,853,2719

The "OCD" answer fits with a few other traditional vampire traits, like the compulsion to stop pick up (or count) spilled grain. – mattdm Apr 12 at 12:29

@Mattdm Wow, The Count from Sesame Street works on so many levels now that I know that. – Bradley Uffner Apr 12 at 16:26

I always wondered about the effect of crosses on a vampire. I mean, if we assume that vampirism can be communicated via blood - then any person could be made into a vampire, regardless of their religion. Would a Jewish vampire have a similar aversion to a Star of David? A Muslim vampire with a crescent and star, etc.? Or is it only the faith of the person *wielding* the holy symbol that counts? Does that mean atheists are inherently more vulnerable? Or can they wield a copy of Darwin's "*Origin of Species*" or something instead? Do you even need the symbol, or is faith alone enough? – Darrel Hoffman Apr 12 at 16:55

@DarrelHoffman This again can potentially be explained by the OCD idea. Based on my knowledge of OCD, having strong religious feelings can play into OCD compulsions pretty strongly. For example, if

vampires are themselves highly religious or anti-religious, perhaps doing something that they feel desecrates or venerates a religious symbol could trigger their OCD. – Kevin Apr 14 at 20:07

@DarrelHoffman Obviously, it depends on the particular mythology in your story. In a *Doctor Who* 7th Doctor story, *The Curse of Fenric*, the vampires are affected by the faith of the person they are facing. Some Russian soldiers use their (misplaced!) faith in the Soviet Union to repel some vampires, while a priest who had lost his faith in God was not saved, even though he was holding a cross against the vampires. – CJ Dennis Apr 16 at 6:38

In the novel *Blindsight* by Peter Watts, vampires have a neurological "glitch" that sends them into an epileptic fit whenever they see a right angle. Presumably the wiring of their visual cortex gives them a very unusual power of perception, but comes with a price. This is called the "crucifix glitch" and the idea is that in nature perfect right angles are very rare, so this glitch wasn't selected against.

I thought this was a brilliant explanation of the crucifix aversion, but you could also utilise it for the invitation problem. After all doors and windows have right angles, so a vampire with a crucifix glitch couldn't pass them with his eyes open. The only way a vampire could enter a house would be, if he was lead by the hand or directed by voice, with his eyes closed (Or possibly with his eyes open, but his vision switched off ...).

So basically when our nasty bloodsucker comes into a little village, he has to switch off his vision, right angles everywhere, and proceed by hearing alone. Now he can do this a lot better than a blind human, in fact you wouldn't easily notice that he can't see, but he is still severely handicapped. It wouldn't do to be caught creeping around, touching walls searching for a way in or attacking humans in the open. His only shot at getting a pint of blood, is to be invited into the safety of a house by somebody he can overwhelm even blindly without making much noise.

Enter "the good but foolish virgin/elderly/child" seeing the traveler walking down the middle of the road, looking all forlorn ...

So basically the invitation is necessary for two reasons: The vampire needs to hear a voice that leads him through the door without appearing blind (people are incredibly suspicious of the blind in these parts). And people have to let him into the house without making a fuzz, because without his vision he would have a hard time to escape from the horror of right angles that is a village. Only once he is behind closed doors with the "good but foolish" can he strike.

Edit: Did you ever wonder why they build houses like this in the old days? Now you know.



OldHouse

answered Apr 12 at 10:42
74418

Hmm, and I thought old timey coffins just had funny angles to save on wood. Turns out the vamps just don't like 90 degrees. Next time I run into one I'll attack him with a box. – CandiedOrange Apr 14 at 5:37

Amusing answer, but a bit of a stretch. I read that book a few years ago, and really enjoyed it. I don't remember single right-angles being a problem, only crossed lines so there are four right-angles together. A vampire could just look at the floor, or to the side, and see just the vertical parts of the door frame, not the right angles it makes at the top. – Peter Cordes Apr 17 at 2:03

Wouldn't there be just as many right angles inside a house as outside, though? I just counted over 300 right angles in just the room I'm in right now. – Timpanus May 1 at 11:58

Sure, the point is that a single victim can be overcome even without sight. The vampire has to get inside a house to kill out of view, because he cannot expect to escape without seeing a thing if he draws attention. – BlindKungFuMaster May 2 at 8:07

It's a partially misunderstood half-truth

Short Version:

Various chemical compounds traditionally used in incense and other religious ceremonies are **highly allergenic**, even occasionally deadly to Vampires. At the dawn of Christianity, a practice developed to **sprinkle the houses of the believers with these 'blessed' substances** at least once every year. Those wanting to deal with the undead would have to purify their homes and remove all traces of such compounds, before these powers would deign to enter their homes. Hence, "inviting the devil into your home."

Full Story:

Speaking as a **Transylvanian native**, I believe I am quite well-positioned to answer your question.

The origins of the **Great Prohibition** (as it is known among the unliving) date back about seventeen hundred years, when a Sublime Alliance was formed under the great Undead Prince Atilla the Hun(gry), who then conquered much what of is now Europe and then led a cleansing invasion against Rome itself. It was a thing of *beauty*, decadent Roman army after Roman army collapsing under the unliving onslaught, with Vampire princes leading vast armies of Ghouls and Alghouls against the living.

...

Ahh. Sorry, got lost in reminiscing there for a moment. Yet the hour of our greatest triumph carried the seeds of destruction within. The Pope, who at the time was a puny little man going by the name of Leo, subsequently called by historians "Saint Leo the Great", received word from certain Northern Shamans that were appalled at the brazen Unliving intrusion into the world of the living, breaking with the subtler approach of countless centuries.

As it turns out, a certain molecular compound, trace amounts of which are contained in **Myrrh**, **Frankincense** and other rare compounds are likely to cause a severe **autoimmune reaction in the modified globulin compounds present in vampiric blood**, such that even skin contact or trace amounts on wood would cause the mother of all allergic reactions.

The Pope met Atilla on the road to Rome. Historical tradition has the pope begging for his city, but that was mere face-saving by the Hun. In fact, the Pope revealed that all homes in Rome had been doused in Frankincense and Myrrh, making the city literally lethal to approach.

As you can imagine, the practice quickly spread, with Atilla himself murdered only months later by the expedient method of having his last 'wife', an Ostrogoth princess called Ildico, perfumed in 'holy' water before being sent to his tent to be devoured.

More such indignity followed, and The Hun empire collapsed like a house of cards in the face of such potent bio-weaponry. The unliving reverted to the subtler approach of older times, and all was well with mankind. The 'blessing' of houses has since ceased (thankfully) for the largest part, but is still occasionally done in Orthodox communities:



priest w holy water

Smug
priest
splashing
deadly
poison
around

This
simple
practice
made
European
homes

inaccessible to the unliving for a millenium and a half. Of course, witches and warlocks that still had dealings with the unliving would have to **take special steps to cleanse their homes of such trace fragrances**, which later evolved in the popular lore as the concept of "inviting" the devil in your home. Silly, really.

Apr 12 at 14:51
Serban Tanasa♦
30.4k14104222

Determination to adhere to traditional rules of courtesy

The world's maybe most famous vampire in literature received his guest with the well-known words:

Enter freely and of your own will! Come freely. Go safely.
And leave something of the happiness you bring.

It is usually agreed that Stoker's intention behind this solemn wording was to make the Count appear unworldly and to give him a testimony of ancient times long past when these words were presumably a formal greeting that described a certain code of conduct both for and towards guests, which indeed exists -- in many variations -- in several ancient (and present) cultures.

Traditionally, anyone violating the laws of hospitality (Atreus and Thyestes come to mind) was considered damned¹.

This code of conduct demands, among other things, that a guest may enter and leave your house freely and safely, unharmed. It *also* requires the house owner to give shelter to a wanderer, and it demands that one does not enter a home *before giving the host a chance to speak out this invitation*.

Since vampires are thought to be immortal, it is reasonable to assume that they are, on the average, *rather ancient*, and so are their memories and their conduct. It is thus reasonable to look at them much in the same way as one would look at a medieval paladin -- following such a code of conduct, and merciless submitting oneself to its rules regardless what the consequences may be.

Although *highly* doubtful, we know from the tales of old that a knight would rather perish than show cowardice, rather burn than tell a lie, and rather endure the worst punishment than break an oath, or fail to show justice or mercy.

In the same sense, one should assume that a vampire *could* most certainly, and easily enter a house without being invited. However, this would violate their code of conduct in a sheer unimaginable way, and they would rather perish than do that.

1Which is a somewhat ironical thing, seeing how the subject is on vampires.

answered Apr 12 at 12:25

Damon

44714

And those few "new" vampires without such a code of conduct would leave fewer survivors, so the story would spread that you must invite a vampire in because those vampires who don't follow that pattern leave no one to tell the truth - that they *can* just walk in. – Martin Carney Apr 13 at 17:08

The vampire could merely *choose* not to enter without permission. Not even by compulsion, but by rational thought.

Perhaps the "curse" reveals the vampire's true nature if they were to enter their prey's home uninvited. The element of surprise is critical to a clean and efficient hunt. Should the alerted prey somehow escape, the vampire's presumably hidden identity could be revealed to the community. A vampire might wisely choose to wait until they're invited and can approach their prey without suspicion.

A code of honor could also drive this kind of behavior. Brute force is violent, messy, barbaric, and far too easy with the vampire's superior strength and resilience. A vampire worth their mettle earns their meal by subtler, more sophisticated means. It's easy to believe that vampires who default to assaulting their prey are considered improper, rude, immature, simple, backwards, etc.

Playing the game could enhance the flavor or actual effects of feeding. Pheromones used to subdue prey might only work if the prey is both calm and very close for some amount of time - impossible to achieve without being welcomed into proximity. Those same pheromones might also drive biological changes in the prey, e.g. releasing serotonin or other pleasure chemicals into the blood, or triggering metabolic processes that make the blood more palatable or digestible. The prey's emotional state might affect the taste or effect of their blood, so most vampires probably prefer to avoid heightened emotions (or even attempt to rouse very specific combinations of emotions for a specific flavor).

Being typically very old and worldly, perhaps they are just bored and looking for a challenge. Or maybe they're psychopathic and can only find the pleasure of cordial social interaction in the people they prey upon.

Apr 12 at 14:23

talrnu

677111

Stardust had a similar idea about the emotional state of the victim immediately before eating them. The fallen star/woman was most valuable to the witches if her heart was cut out just as she was happiest and at peace. It was still good if she died in terror, but it was *so much better* if she died calm and happy. –

Martin Carney Apr 13 at 17:12

Commenting on the suggestion that the flavor might be enhanced by "playing the game" - I know many people who hunt, and they agree that an animal that is shot in such a manner as to cause immediate death, without startling it beforehand, has a better flavor than one that was pursued, or one that was wounded and took a minute to die. They attribute this to the stress of the death causing chemical changes in the meat. – swilliams Apr 14 at 17:41

This answer by Philipp suggests a world where doors are operated electronically, and vampires don't trigger the sensors to open the doors the same way that humans do. The only way to get through the door is for someone else to open it for them (essentially "inviting" them in).

In his scenario, the vampires are actually invisible, and simply psychically project an image of themselves, which explains why they don't trigger the sensors (and why they don't appear in mirrors as well), but it could be something different as well.

- Perhaps vampirism is caused by a virus of some sort, and doors are programmed to detect the

virus and refuse to open to anyone carrying it, to prevent an epidemic.

- Perhaps vampires give off (or reflect) some type of radiation invisible to the human eye, but which blinds the door sensors. (e.g. infra-red or ultraviolet rays).
- Perhaps the door sensors do a retinal scan, or some other type of biometric scan, and the vampires are altered enough from humans that they don't register as human on the scan.

Apr 12 at 16:11
GentlePurpleRain
1894

Self-hatred: Perhaps the vampires actually despise their own actions and what they have become. In an act of self-justification, they feel that if they are invited in that they have permission to do what they need to do. Sort of like a member of an organization that hazes initiates and justifies it by saying "That's what I went through when I was new". So the vampire thinks about their decision to allow entrance to the vampire that turned them, and justifies it: "It's not my fault. They bring this on themselves, as I brought it upon myself."

Lack of power: Perhaps vampires really don't have any great strength, can't turn into mists or bats and fly, etc, etc. They're actually rather sickly except that they have fairly strong psychic powers. Not so strong as to be able to overpower someone who stands up to them with a clear mind, but strong enough to overcome the weak or clouded mind. Considering their strangeness, most people get a "bad feeling" about them, but those who are weak or inattentive enough to invite them in are weak enough to be overcome psychically.

A test: Perhaps vampires can control some minds but not others. It's a genetic thing, like having allergies. The request may be anything unusual, not just entering a house, and it's a test to see if they can control the intended victim or not. So it might be, "Give me \$100", or "Let me have your horse", if you're out in the middle of nowhere, but inside a home is a convenient place to commit vampiric crimes, so the house thing is traditional and useful.

Drugs: Perhaps vampires have no psychic abilities at all, but rather rely on a psychotropic drug, and the request is a test of whether they were able to administer a sufficient dose. Administering it is an art (in the air, in food, etc), and you can't administer too much or the victim passes out in public, or perhaps dies and is toxic, so you need just enough to assure compliance, but not so much as to cause trouble or spoil the meal.

Last, are you sure it's entering another's house uninvited. Wasn't the famous movie line about the victim entering the vampire's house of their own free will?

Apr 12 at 17:32
Wayne
30015

I hate to bring the Bible to a science-based question, but the answer to this one could be biblical; specifically, Exodus 12:23, where lamb's blood upon the door frame instructed Death to not enter.

Perhaps in a world where vampires are governed by scientific processes, biblical phenomena are also supported by (as of yet undiscovered) scientifically-measurable causes. If so, and if the force which animates the undead is be strongly associated to the force of death which struck down the first-born Egyptians, then the ancient science of that lamb's blood might bind vampires as well.

It would require a little tinkering with history to spread the affect across all doorways. Maybe an Egyptian vampire wandered through the front door of an abandoned Israeli hut soon after the exodus and got incinerated by the leftover lamb's blood. Ever since that day, all vampires have avoided family doorways

out of superstition and fear, not realizing that the danger was in the blood, not the doorway.

Apr 12 at 20:15
Henry Taylor
13.4k21757

Good point. I guess the original vampire stories are set in a world where the Bible is true. (Crucifixes and holy water working etc)Matthew LockApr 14 at 4:23

I like the psychology angle. Consider that perhaps they *can*, but they just *don't*. Vampires are traditionally vile creatures, and there's a certain poetry to the limitation. It mirrors a condition in the human mind of inviting one's own troubles upon oneself.

It's a trope in fiction, really. At the end of the story, when the hero has lost and the villain has won (or at least it so appears), the villain gloats that the hero was in part responsible for the outcome, often using lines such as "you invited all this on yourself" or "you have nobody to blame but yourself."

As the traditionally vile and poetic creatures that vampires are, maybe they appreciate the irony and use this strategy of only entering when invited to ensure that their own desire for drama (as well as food) is fulfilled.

Apr 12 at 13:33
Devsman
6608

Love?

Could the 'love' in a home be unbearable for the vampire, unless an act of kindness is extended from the people in the home, i.e. being invited into the home.

Love does include chemical processes in the brain. And some left-behind empathic wiring in the brain of the vampire could go into a very painful overdrive, that could be cancelled by the invitation.

I know this is supposed to be scientific; I hope this is sufficiently scientific.

Apr 13 at 15:18 answered Apr 12 at 10:31
GentlePurpleRainBentNielsen
1894 22314

What is the mechanism by which the vampire would be sensitive in this way? How would an invitation shut it down? Do all homes have this kind of "love"? What if no one is home? Why would this be specific to homes, anyway? – mattdm Apr 12 at 12:32

When turned into a vampire the brain is fried. The only warm thing left is a memory of your childhood home and that safety that was there. At the doorstep the vampire knows it is about to destroy that safety for others and the overdrive of the earliest memories kicks in. Being invited into the home breaks the overdrive because then everything is ok and safe. (But then what about vampires that was orphans or had abusive parents...). – BentNielsen Apr 12 at 19:24

Vampires are extremely territorial. For a vampire to enter another vampire's territory uninvited is an act of naked aggression that will be met with immediate and unrestrained force. This generally benefits humans, as the secretive nature of vampires means they cannot be sure which homes are claimed by another, unknown vampire, who might ambush them while they are vulnerable in the act of feeding.

The invitation serves two purposes. Firstly, it serves to soothe the vampire's instincts that warn against leaving its own territory. Secondly, it indicates to vampire that the home is not part of another vampire's territory.

Through subtle hormonal alteration applied directly into the bloodstream, vampires affect the dispositions

of the humans upon which they feed. A drawn human will become reclusive, suspicious, and share the vampire's extreme territoriality. The invitation to enter, given without duress, is a clear signal that the human does not live in a dwelling claimed by another vampire.

Apr 12 at 22:11

edited Apr 13 at 20:06Smingleigh
312

This is your best bet :Radiation emitted by the human body

Yes, all objects, including human bodies, emit electromagnetic radiation. The wavelength of radiation emitted depends on the temperature of the objects. Such radiation is sometimes called thermal radiation. Most of the radiation emitted by human body is in the infrared region, mainly at the wavelength of 12 micron.

- A vampire can't enter a house when he senses hostile emitted radiation (not welcomed).
- A vampire can enter a house when he senses friendly emitted radiation (welcomed).

answered Apr 12 at 7:57

edited Apr 12 at 13:30Javert
472317

Although this wouldn't cover someone who wasn't particularly hostile but hadn't explicitly invited them in (e.g. someone who didn't know they were a vampire) – colmde Apr 12 at 9:59
Doesn't explain people walking down the street either. Or, for that matter, what if we had a setup like The Truman Show? That is, a huge building that contains inside it smaller buildings that resemble a small mid-american town. What constitutes "inside"? – Draco18s Apr 12 at 16:07

What about the **Extended Phenotype** shown by certain parasites?

Parasite Manipulation is where a parasite invades a host and then forces it into behavior outside its norm.

Examples of this are:

- the suicidal drowning of crickets infected by hairworm, a behaviour that is essential to the parasite's reproductive cycle.
- female mosquitoes carrying malaria parasites. The mosquitoes are significantly more attracted to human breath and odors than uninfected mosquitoes.
- ants infected by a fungus called cordyceps. These ants will move down onto the jungle floor out in the open (a complete anti-survival trait for them) before becoming immobilized by the cordyceps which then bursts its spores over a wide area to infect more ants.

In short, your vampires might be hosts to some killer virus that alters their metabolisms to feed off of blood. As a bonus, it heightens their senses, increases their reflexes and strength and their ability to heal.

In payment, it 'abhors' certain kinds of smells, perhaps the pheromones emitted by uninfected humans when they feel safe cause the virus to avoid the area and instead prefer areas where humans are emitting sexual pheromones (such as near a bar or maybe where prostitutes hang out). This would be way beyond deep at a near instinctual level and would be extremely hard for an infected vampire to fight or ignore.

Apr 12 at 19:48
Hirahito

Seattle's 'man in tree' sent to psychiatric hospital

May 31, 2016

yahoo.com

<https://www.yahoo.com/news/seattles-man-tree-sent-psychiatric-hospital-225611574.html?nhp=1>

SEATTLE (AP) — A man who spent 25 hours high atop a sequoia tree in downtown Seattle in March has been found incompetent to stand trial on a malicious mischief charge.

Cody Lee Miller has been held on \$50,000 bail since he climbed the tree March 22 and ignored police efforts to coax him down, throwing branches and apples at responders, before climbing down.

KOMO-TV reports (<http://goo.gl/o6F5LT>) Miller will be sent to the state's largest psychiatric hospital for a 45-day evaluation with another competency hearing set for July 11.

The drama sparked intense interest on social media, with new Twitter accounts and the hashtag #ManInTree trending.

Miller's mother, Lisa Gossett of Wasilla, Alaska, said previously the family has tried to get him help for mental illness but was told there was nothing anyone could do unless he posed a danger to himself or others.

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What Exactly Was In That Love Potion 100 Years Ago?



The secret "love potion" ingredient? It's at the end of our story.

It's the 21st century. You'd think the number of people who believe in magic spells and potions would be declining. Unfortunately it is not. For proof look at how China is helping to wipe out the rhinoceros by buying rhino horns through poaching. These uneducated fools believe that the rhino's horn contains "medicinal" value to make a man virile.

Should we expect with more information and better education humanity has become more enlightened about patent medicine? Probably not. The internet has spread just as much misinformation as fact. And there's one more factor to consider: people have always been rather gullible when it comes to falling for quackery.

No, things have remained the same and unscrupulous people have pushed secret and magic love potions upon ignorant hopefuls from time immemorial.

Here in New York City almost 100 years ago, is proof that the city has always been a central repository for all sorts of hucksterism.

This article is from September 20, 1919 and appeared in the New York Sun. By the way, what a great term for fortune teller – "seeress."

LOVE LURE BRINGS SEERESS TO COURT

Detective Charges Her With Selling Powder to Clients.

Mrs. Rose Campagno, 40, of 214 East 116th street was held in \$300 bail on a charge of fortune telling in Harlem court yesterday on evidence gathered by Miss Rae Nicolette, a detective of Deputy Commissioner O'Grady's staff. The detective described a visit to Mrs. Campagno's apartment and stressed the discovery of a substance described as a "love powder" which she confiscated and brought to court.

Magistrate Huth asked what the powder was for and was informed that it had magical powers of attracting the male of the species. Mrs. Campagno said it was a scent which the male could not escape and was certain to bring the wearer to matrimony. It was a practical substitute for Cupid's dart, she declared. According to the detective the "love powder" sold for \$10 an ounce. Under questioning by the court Mrs. Campagno said the chief ingredient of the powder was licorice.

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'They are evil monsters that attack us night and day': Senegal's killer hippo problem

By Peter Holley
May 28

washingtonpost.com

The Washington Post Each day, when Ali Fall heads to work, he knows he's tempting death.

The 25-year-old is not a soldier or a police officer battling urban crime, but a simple fisherman — one who spends his days hauling nets in the the waters of Gambia river in eastern Senegal, according to Agence France Presse.

It might be a placid existence, were it not for an aggressive creature lurking at the water's edge.

That animal, AFP reports, is the reason Fall conducted his interview from a hospital bed, where he was wrapped in bloodied bandages.

He is lucky to be alive.

"I came with another fisherman to pick up the nets I had left when the hippopotamus upended our boat," Fall told AFP. "My friend got away, but it bit into my left leg, then my right."



Ali Fall lays on a hospital bed May 12 in Gouloumbou, eastern Senegal. (Seyl Lou/AFP/Getty Images)

"It's the second time I've been attacked, after their first attempt in 2014," he added. "I've cheated death twice."

Many others from his village of Gouloumbou have not, as the waters "have often run red with the blood of his peers," according to AFP.

In the last decade, hippos — the most dangerous mammal in Africa, according to National Geographic — have mauled 25 fishermen to death and injured many

more in Gouloumbou, elders told AFP.

"Hippopotamus" is Greek for "river horse." Unlike horses, whose instinct is to flee from danger, hippos are unpredictable, territorial and often tempestuous, making them fearsome creatures in spite of their doughy, almost cartoonish appearance.

[It wasn't letting go': Woman rushed to hospital with a shark attached to her arm]

Videos showing the animals fearlessly brutalizing crocodiles are commonly posted on

YouTube.

Despite that appearance, they are deceptively fast, especially in water, where they become graceful swimmers. A viral YouTube video shows a hippo chasing tourists on a motorboat and briefly keeping pace.

The massive herbivores are also surprisingly swift on land, clocking in at an estimated 18 to 30 mph, according to the Nature Conservancy.

"Hippo pods are led by dominant males, which can weigh 6,000 pounds or more," according to a Smithsonian magazine article from 2006. "Females and most other males weigh between 3,500 and 4,500 pounds, and all live about 40 years."

"Though they occasionally spar with crocodiles, a growing number of skirmishes are with humans," the magazine notes. "Hippos have trampled or gored people who strayed too near, dragged them into lakes, tipped over their boats and bitten off their heads."

[Pablo Escobar's hippos are wreaking havoc in Colombia]

Reports of marauding hippos surface in countries across Africa and Asia every few years. The exact number of people killed and injured each year by hippos is not known.

But regarding one notable period of destruction 16 years ago, AFP reported that rampaging herds of hippos were "spreading terror" among farmers and fishermen along the river Niger, in the west African country of the same name. Local authorities told the wire service in 2000 that the animals were attacking boatmen and were responsible for smashing or sinking about a dozen vessels.

The hippos were also attacking cattle grazing near the riverbank; locals, it seemed, were defenseless.

"Teams armed with machetes, clubs and burning torches have been set up to protect the rice fields, but a local trader said the strategy was ineffective because the villagers are unable to resist the charges of the ravenous animals," AFP reported at the time.

More recently, a 2014 hippo attack in the same country left 12 children and an adult dead, according to AFP. The hippo flipped a boat transporting the group across a river en route to school, though the AFP report did not clarify whether the students drowned or were mauled, either by a single hippo or by a pod.

"Ultimately it was 12 students, including seven girls and five boys, who died after the attack," Minister of Secondary Education Aichatou Oumani told AFP at the time.

[A swarm of 100,000 'out-of-control' bats has made residents of this town 'prisoners in their own homes']

In Gouloubou, village chief Abdoulaye Barro Watt has described a terrifying and treacherous situation. He told AFP that locals like Fall continue to endure the wrath of violent

hippos because the river is their only source of income.

"These men are struggling to survive due to these attacks," he said. "I have written so many letters to the authorities, even the fisheries minister, to make them aware of the problem."

Even so, Gouloumbou villagers told AFP, venturing into the waters is a last resort, in part because their ethnic group's traditional fishing boat — a wooden skiff known as a "pirogue" — provides little protection from an angry hippo.

Moussa Bocar Gueye said he hasn't been fishing in three weeks.

"They are evil monsters who attack us night and day," he told AFP. "Because of them, we haven't been fishing. There aren't any more fish at the market."

But killing hippos is not an option, AFP reports, because they're a protected species in Senegal.

Fishermen aren't the only ones vulnerable to attack, according to AFP.

Villagers rely on the tributary to wash their clothes and bathe, but they do so warily.

"I'm scared they'll attack," Aminata Sy, who does laundry in the river, told AFP. "That's why I always stay facing the river."

"We don't have a well or any taps," she added.



Children wash clothes and splash in the Gambia river near Gouloumbou on May 12. (Seyi Lou/AFP/Getty Images)

There is some hope, however.

Djibril Signate, Senegal's national director of inland fishing, told the news service that the government plans to provide fishermen with 20 metal pirogues — with motors — to provide more safety during an attack.

"We are installing a fish farming enclosure in Gouloumbou," Signate said. "The ministry has also distributed nets, hooks and lifejackets so they can

fish in pools that are chock full (of fish)."

Despite the new boats and the fishing enclosure, Fall has had enough of the hippos lurking in the river.

"After I get better," he said, "I'm changing profession."

Peter Holley is a general assignment reporter at The Washington Post. He can be reached at

peter.holley@washpost.com.

Follow @peterjholley

270 Comments

Johnitises

1:24 PM PDT

I almost stopped reading here, knowing that this was going to be another stereotypical life is treacherous in Africa fluff piece: "Each day, when Ali Fall heads to work, he knows he's tempting death. The 25-year-old is not a soldier or a police officer battling urban crime..." The second most dangerous job in the US is fisherman. Police officers don't even make the top-ten list whether they police the suburbs or where black people live (read: "urban"). I can't believe that editors let this stuff out.

warhorse03826

11:16 AM PDT

someone convince the chinese the dangly bits of a hippo will keep your yang up, and we'll have to protect the hippos in about 6 months.

knape1

9:56 AM PDT

25 deaths in the last 10 years, They should be happy they dont live in Chicago, New Orleans, Fallujah, Rio, S.E DC.....

garbonzatoid22

8:39 AM PDT

Don't they have supermarkets that sell cans of tuna?

PleaseSendSnacks1

Ted Allen Hart

5/28/2016 10:52 PM PDT

They need to change their policies to allow hippo hunting. That will make them more wary of humans because they will associate humans with death and run. Best scenario anyway. You can eat hippo meat also.

dan212 and hkat2

TotalSkeptic

10:42 AM PDT

Nice way to define your thinking Hart; If it bothers you kill it. Ecologically responsible as well. Not!

These Hippo's live there too and the natives either manage the risk or they don't. Comes with the territory.

Like living in Chicago or Fallujah as knape1 pointed out, only safer.

Larry Donaldson

5/28/2016 10:12 PM PDT

Anyone with the slightest bit of savvy knows all animals are territorial to include domestic pets. They are just like humans because a human is a animal. So if you don't want to get hurt or killed let the animals have their territory. People who knowingly cross the line concerning a animals territory does so at their own risk. People invade snake dens to capture snakes and are bitten. You sure as hell do not disturb a sow bear or pig if she has young or any female animal. (That's more than a lot of humans do!)

This guy knew the dangers of his trade. Hunting guides, iron workers, gas well workers,

merchant marine sailors just about everyone knows that if you keep pushing your luck with Mother Nature she's going to push back and push back hard!

Pflarg1

Dolorous Edd

5/28/2016 9:02 PM PDT

Hippos are very cranky because their diets never work.

PleaseSendSnacksrojocorona

Damonlee22

5/28/2016 8:37 PM PDT

The most dangerous animal in Africa.. Hippos kill more people each year than lions, elephants, leopards, buffaloes and rhinos combined.

Curtis Jolicoeur

Curtis Jolicoeur

4:56 AM PDT

oh my~

XXFER1

Curtis Jolicoeur

4:56 AM PDT

oh my~

Concerned for American Poor

5/28/2016 6:13 PM PDT

This article appears to have two different topics the poor living conditions in Africa and what they have termed killer hippos. I know living conditions in Africa are poor, and I will not comment on that for I do not know enough about it. What I will comment on is the so called "killer hippos." We humans are the only creatures that consider ownership and hold it in high regard. Most other animals are territorial. In both cases, the view is the same this is the area I live in and you have no business being in this area if I do not know you. Yet we never consider the view of the animal or the other human who may be just cutting across your property so we claim the right to shoot them and possibly kill them. Yet, we consider the hippo wrong for wanting to protect its territory? As if, they understood our speech and thoughts, in addition to the reason for invading their territory. Makes perfect sense.

Pflarg1

ScottLoar

5/28/2016 8:48 PM PDT

"Yet we never consider the view of the animal or the other human who may be just cutting across your property so we claim the right to shoot them and possibly kill them." Not difficult to find such a fatuous remark in the Yahoo Comments.

So, you have experience of deer, raccoons, field mice, teenagers cutting across the neighbors' property and being gunned down, do ya'? An every day occurrence sanctioned by law in your neck of the woods, is it? You are just being silly.

Then this, "we consider the hippo wrong for wanting to protect its territory"? In your universe hippos are the same as the neighbor with a gun, huh? Just trying to protect what it has, eh?

Humans have lived in the same places as hippos well before early man came out of Africa, and so recognize that humans - yes, your own kind - have been part of the African environment for tens of thousands of years, so don't deny this man's right to fish. Yes, he has every right to kill the hippo. Oh, need I tell you, hippos are not an endangered specie and are recognized as the most dangerous animal in sub-Saharan Africa. This man has every right to protect himself and his livelihood, which is difficult for you to accept cocooned as you are by comfort and so relieved of having to daily face his dangers.

Adrian Fripp

5/28/2016 5:25 PM PDT

The picture implies the result of poor people having children because they don't have access to birth control.

DougalE

5/28/2016 7:40 PM PDT

As if they would choose to not have children if offered methods of birth control.

Children are a source of wealth in these countries. They are insurance for the future. They easily perform difficult and necessary forms of labor and will take care of their parents when they get old.

The idea that because you believe population control is necessary and that these people should agree is cultural chauvinism.

Growth and prosperity in these countries depends on a strong, healthy next generation.

See More

J_O_K_the_III

5/28/2016 5:13 PM PDT

Competition for resources plain & simple. If humans want to they can win of course, but they'll virtually have to wipe the hippos out. Which is likely coming, I'm sorry to say but there are just too many people on this earth. I know many don't want to hear that....

avon691

DougalE

5/28/2016 7:41 PM PDT

The article details ways that make the wiping out of Hippos unnecessary.

There are not too many people on this earth. If you think so, kill yourself and that will help alleviate the problem.

ScottLoar1

Marlys Ellen

5/28/2016 4:21 PM PDT

First thing is to get them some running water.pronto.. I don't understand why the central bank, nato or whoever have not done this yet for these people.

Pflarg1

Bob S.

5/28/2016 4:28 PM PDT

It's one thing to put in a 'running water" supply, quite another to maintain it. That requires

ongoing funding and training that isn't going to appear magically from beyond the horizon. And even places like California that are a lot better funded than Niger & Senegal can have problems....more

ScottLoar1

fogdogsf

5/28/2016 7:43 PM PDT

Bob S. is spot on. Unfortunately, too many companies, NGO's and governments would rather provide money so they can wash their hands of the problem after they deliver the funds. May I suggest that the thousands of homeless people in the U.S. who receive public and charitable assistance be trained for a peace corps type of service and then be sent to these undeveloped and developing countries to pass along their training and provide help.more

Johnitises

1:29 PM PDT

As if these corporations donate cash out the goodness of their hearts. They loan money, so that can permanently keep countries down and exploit their resources. With a loan comes policies such as, "no, you can't use your own dairies anymore, you have to import milk from Nestle and charge your citizens more for it. Here, sign the papers."

Daniel Martin

5/28/2016 4:09 PM PDT

hahahahahahahaha, even hippos don't like the "chappies"

Pflarg1

brooklyncitizens

5/28/2016 3:56 PM PDT

I traveled to Victoria Falls a few years ago and signed up for an early sunrise cruise on the Zambezi River. It was breathtakingly beautiful but seriously I was a bit anxious- there were Hippos wading in the water in every direction. We just trusted that the little boat would steer clear and it did.

On that same trip I went on safari in an open jeep and we encountered a small herd of elephants crossing the road. A large female came charging at us and the guide cut the engine told us to not make eye contact and be still. She waved her trunk and made that trumpeting noise and after seeing we were not making sudden moves she move towards the tall grass and continued crossing...right behind her was the cutest baby elephant on the planet...just sauntering behind Mom. We waited a while til they crossed and then resumed our safari.

Dawn E McNeilsleevebrooklyncitizens and number164

ftb

5/28/2016 4:36 PM PDT

It's quite breathtaking, isn't it? I was in Tanzania 12.5 years ago, and I remember every part of the Serengeti and the other camps I went to. Magical, indeed.

brooklyncitizens1

brooklyncitizens

5/28/2016 5:24 PM PDT

It is. I bicycled in Zimbabwe and flew up to the Falls at the end of the trip. Africa is heartachingly beautiful.

Johnitises

1:31 PM PDT

How terrifying! You must have felt like "a soldier or a police officer battling urban crime."

James Savage

5/28/2016 3:54 PM PDT

"THIS PROBLEM IS SO FREAKING EASY TO RESOLVE~~~"HAVE A HIPPOPOTAMUS BAR~B~QUE!!!"

Steve59jonbeckmon and TERM LIMITS PLEASE3

MisterCzech

5/28/2016 5:07 PM PDT

And invite one thousand crocodiles....more

- **washingtonpost.com**
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Sex-toy bandit jailed

stuff.co.nz

stuff Man in Australia jailed for threatening mechanic with sex toy

REBEKAH ISON

Last updated 15:29, June 7 2016

A man in Australia who used a large sex toy to threaten a mechanic from whom he'd been demanding money has been told by a sentencing judge to "settle down" and stop offending.

Sydney man Aaron Sabbah, 42, was on Tuesday sentenced to a maximum of 12 months' jail, more than three years after he entered the mechanic's workshop with a 45cm black dildo in the company of two "stocky" men.

Judge John North said there was little doubt the tradesman, who had already handed over A\$4500 in an attempt to placate Sabbah, thought he was going to be assaulted.

"On the CCTV ... the offender can be seen to be carrying a large black dildo in his right hand, which he is swinging as he walks in," Judge John North said during his sentencing at Downing Centre District Court on Tuesday.

"The offender said (to the mechanic), 'come into the office'."

The court heard Sabbah had a misguided belief the mechanic, who cannot be named for legal reasons, owed him money and had made threats via phone, texts, the instant messaging app Viber, and in person to cause him serious harm.

The court heard Sabbah, a muscular former personal trainer, had a "bee in his bonnet" when his Mercedes-Benz, worth more than A\$167,000 and which he'd previously stolen back after it was repossessed, was seized by police while it was being driven by the mechanic.

He previously told court he'd asked the mechanic, who cannot be named for legal reasons, not to use the car.

The court heard Sabbah had a criminal history dating back to 1991 and had previously spent time in jail.

In sentencing him, Judge North took into account Sabbah's guilty pleas and the fact that his financially dependent partner was due to give birth in August.

He backdated the sentence and ordered Sabbah be eligible for recognisance release after seven months in prison, meaning he could be with his partner around the time the child is born.

"It's time he gave up offending and settled down," Judge North said.

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World's Largest Solar Plant Sets Itself on Fire

popularmechanics.com

Improperly aligned mirrors redirected the sun's rays at the wrong spot.



By

The Ivanpah Solar Electric Generating System, a concentrated solar thermal in California and the world's largest solar thermal power station, suffered a small fire on one of its three boiler towers Thursday, according to the Associated Press. The fire caused the boiler

tower to be shut down while firefighters ascended 300 feet to deal with the blaze, leaving the plant at one third power since another tower is already down for maintenance.

The Ivanpah plant works by using its massive fields of mirrors to direct sunlight towards the top of the three 459-foot boiler towers, which then creates the steam to drive turbines that create the actual electricity. But several misaligned mirrors directed some of this sunlight to the wrong place, starting a fire amidst some electrical cables, San Bernardino County, California fire Capt. Mike McClintock told the AP. Plant personnel had the fire out by the time firefighters on site.

Image by @SBCOUNTYFIRE of damage to the #Ivanpah solar project. Imagine what this type of heat does to feathers. pic.twitter.com/mNcprnv5v3c

— @savethedesert (@SaveTheDesert) May 20, 2016

The fire comes just months after reports that the facility may have to shut down entirely due to its inability to provide the amount of power that was originally promised, not to mention its tendency to fry thousands of birds in the process. And that's when it's *not* catching itself on fire.

Source: Associated Press

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Sorcerers and soulstealers: hair-cutting panics in old China

mikedashhistory.com

A Blast From The Past

by Mike Dash

Sorcerers and soulstealers: hair-cutting panics in old China

30 May 2016 30 May 2016/ allkindsofhistory



*A Chinese prisoner – wearing the long pigtail, or queue, that was mandated for all indigenous subjects of the Celestial Empire – is interrogated by a Qing magistrate. Engraving from Mason & Dadley's voyeuristic classic *The Punishments of China* (1901).*

China, in the middle of the eighteenth century, was the largest nation in the world – and also, by a distance, the most prosperous. Under the rule of a strong emperor, Hungli, and a well-established family (the Qing, or Manchu, dynasty), the Middle Kingdom was by then half-way through the longest period of calm in its long history. It had grown larger, richer and more cultured, its borders reaching roughly their modern extent. But it had also grown vastly more crowded; political stability, and the introduction of new crops from the Americas, led to a doubling of the

population to around 300 million. At its peak, this growth was accelerating at an annual rate in excess of 13%.

This meant trouble, for it meant that wealth was far from evenly distributed. China remained a country of great contrasts: its ruling classes rich beyond the dreams of avarice, its peasants scraping a bare living from the soil. For those living at the bottom of the food chain – both metaphorically and literally – starvation was a constant possibility, one that grew ever more starkly real the further one travelled from the rich agricultural floodplains around the Yangtze River. By the late 1760s, many peasants were forced to turn to begging to survive, wandering miles from their homes to throw themselves upon the mercy of strangers. Tens of thousands of such forced migrations led inevitably to conflict. They also led to one of the strangest outbreaks of panic and rumour known to history.

Among the hundreds of victims of this panic was an itinerant beggar by the name of Chang-ssu, who came from the province of Shantung. Chang-ssu travelled in company with his 11-year-old son, and between them the pair made an insecure living by singing a romantic folk song, 'Lotus petals fall,' to crowds of peasants whom they drummed up in their wanderings from village to village. By the end of July 1768, the two beggars had got as far as the gates of Hsu-chou, a city about 200 miles south of their home, when – at least according to Chang-

failed to turn up any evidence to corroborate accounts that had been given under torture. A monk suspected of being Baldy Liu was picked up in Kiangnan province, but he died of heatstroke while being taken to the local jail. In Hai-chou, no monk named Ming-yuan could be found in any of the local temples.

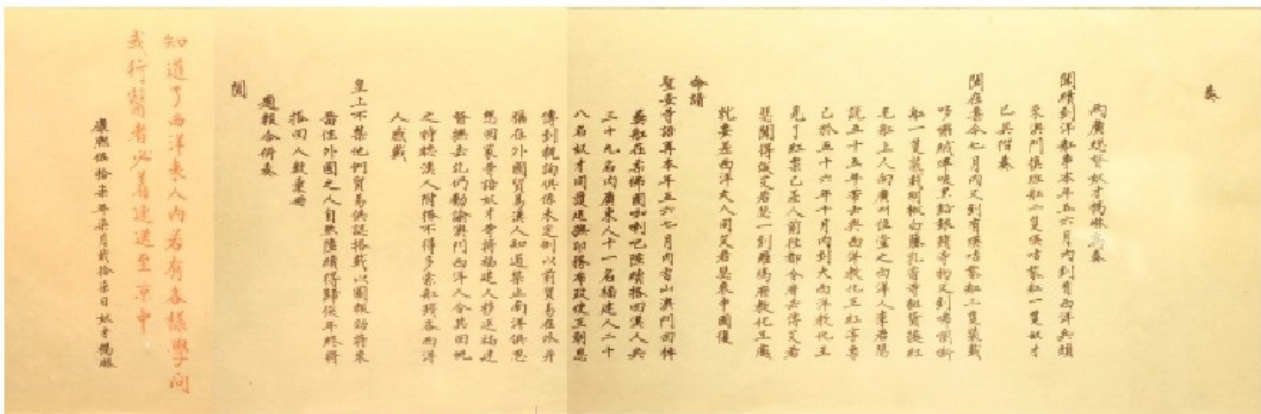


Hongli (1711-99), who reigned as the Qianlong emperor from 1735 until his abdication in 1796. The sixth Qing emperor was an able administrator who saw the soulstealing crisis as a means of asserting his power over provincial government.

The third problem confronting the men tackling the soulstealing affair on the ground was tougher still, however. It was the ticklish question of how much they should tell their emperor. The Manchu system of government depended on the maintenance of a delicate balance of power. The emperor, in Beijing, was nominally all-powerful, possessing the power of life and death over his subordinates – though by this period control was more usually a matter of bestowing or withdrawing favour. On the other hand, he depended on trusted subordinates to keep him supplied with the information that he needed to make his decisions. Bureaucrats strove to please their master in order to gain the promotions and ascend a complex hierarchy of magistrates, provincial governors, and governors-general, but they remained eternally aware that it was dangerous to report problems to the throne unless those problems came with a solution. Announcing the existence of a soulstealing conspiracy without first laying their hands on the men responsible for it risked attracting the emperor's ire, and possibly worse if the matter was not swiftly resolved to Hongli's satisfaction. As a result, it was not uncommon for

provincial officials to suppress bad news in the hope that word of it would never reach Beijing. The Manchu system of accountability, therefore, revolved around control of information; officials knew that they could not be blamed for failing to prosecute a crime if they could plausibly claim they did not know that it had been committed in the first place.

Hongli, of course, was perfectly aware of this, and little angered the emperor more than the suspicion that one of his subordinates was concealing something from him. His solution to the problem was to evolve a parallel "back channel" of informants – mainly trusted Manchus – to send in reports behind the backs of governors and magistrates. It was thanks to this informal system that the emperor first became aware of reports of soulstealing.



An example (left) of the vermilion comments brushed onto official communications by the emperors of China. This one is a memorial addressed to Hungli's grandfather, the revered Kangxi emperor.

From Hungli's point of view, the problem that he now confronted was a tricky one. China was difficult to rule; the empire was vast, while its bureaucracy was relatively tiny. In 1768, the emperor depended on a minuscule elite of only 63 provincial governors, just over half of them Manchu, each controlling what amounted to substantial states; the province of Liankiang alone was twice the size of France, and contained a population of some 70 million. And while the bureaucracy was generally capable of handling routine tasks, a crisis such as the soulstealing scare fell well outside its normal remit. This meant, among other things, that it was impossible for emperor and governors alike to anchor their responses in the familiar system of checks and balances. There were simply no "norms" for sorcery arrests that would let Hungli know how well or badly his subordinates were performing.

We know what the emperor thought about the soulstealing affair because he left a clear account of his feelings in the form of the annotations that he brushed on bureaucratic correspondence. These fragments of imperial marginalia, written in a special vermilion ink that was reserved for his exclusive use, reveal Hungli's anger at being kept in the dark about the existence of a potentially dangerous threat, his concern that a panic based on the clipping of queues was likely to involve dangerous sedition, and his anxiety at the apparent impossibility of laying hands on the true culprits: the master sorcerers who (at least according to the testimony of the unfortunates tortured to extract it up and down the Grand Canal) were actually behind the scare. Most of all, Hungli clearly feared that he was not in possession of the whole truth, which meant that the crisis might be far more pressing and serious than he was being told. "You take your sweet time sending in memorials," he wrote on one underling's report, "and there isn't a word of truth in them! You have really disappointed my trust in you, you ingrate of a *thing*!"



A landscape in mountainous Anhwei province, one of three controlled by Governor-General G'aojin.

The unfortunate administrator stationed at the heart of the affair was G'aojin, a Han Chinese specialist in river conservancy who had risen to be governor-general of Kiangnan, a vast territory, centred on the Yangtze delta, which incorporated the provinces of Kiangsu, Kiangsi and Anhwei. Kiangnan was regarded as the richest but most demanding posting in the whole empire, and Hungli kept a special eye on it. Almost as soon as he first heard reports of the soulstealing affair, he fired off a curt enquiry to discover whether cases of sorcery had been reported in G'aojin's

districts. The bland reply that he received – there had been rumours, but no cases – apparently enraged him, for he refused to be content with the response. Other provinces had reported actual cases of soulstealing, he wrote back to G'aojin; "how can Kiangnan alone have none?" The local bureaucracy, the emperor added, was surely "substandard," and its "practice of making something appear to be nothing is really hateful."

G'aojin's next memorial made matters worse; the rumours, he was now forced to admit, dated all the way back to the previous spring, but had proved impossible to verify. It was G'aojin, Hungli now heard, whose men had set off in pursuit of the uncatchable sorcerer Ming-yuan, and who had not only failed to locate him, or anyone matching his description, but had also been unable even to find the Three Teachings Temple at Hai-chou where he was supposed to be hiding. This time the response from Beijing was frighteningly curt: G'aojin's entire administration, Hungli wrote, was "really despicable."



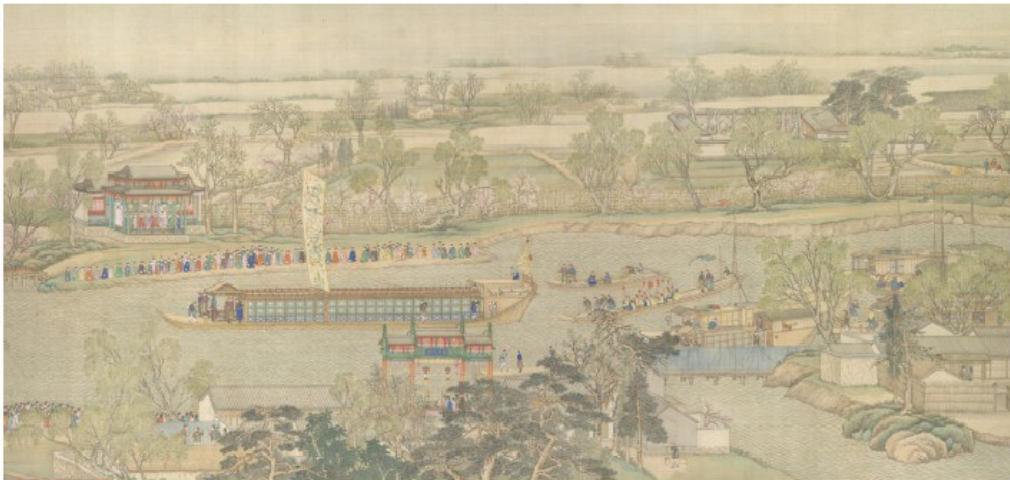
China in 1768, showing the provinces at the heart of the soulstealing panic (in box) and the course of the Grand Canal, along which the rumours seemed to spread. Click to view in higher resolution.

It was at this point that the emperor demanded full transcripts of all the interrogations that had taken place to date, and realised for the first time how many soulstealing suspects had been questioned and released after suffering only minor punishments. Local officials, he realised, had been "far too lenient," and in doing so had "nourished traitors." The best recourse was to have all existing suspects re-arrested and interrogated anew in the hope of unearthing better information. In addition, other potential suspects were to be swept up, "not sticking to the niceties" in cases in which names or descriptions did not match.

These were the commands of an angry, anxious man, and Hungli's subordinates were quick to follow up with action. Unfortunately for them, additional interrogations, and the application of worse torture merely had the effect of multiplying evidence and adding new allegations. Agonised suspects were forced to confess that the master-sorcerers who were being sought could not be found because they were on the move; Ming-yuan was said to be heading for Beijing. The names of new

sorcerers were uncovered, and by August the authorities had tracked down one of their alleged bases, the ominously-named Dark Dragon Temple – but they had failed to make significant new arrests. To make matters worse, the first stirrings of trouble in the capital itself were coming in: several city folk claimed to have been stupefied, and one woman said she had been overcome by an unexplained romantic longing. Most of the witnesses concerned claimed to have lost part or even all of their queues; anti-sorcery charms began appearing on Beijing doors.

Hungli – who had retreated from the steamy heat of summer and taken refuge in the Manchu's summer palace, north of the Great Wall – continued to monitor and direct developments. His chief focus, as always, was on rooting out the least hint of rebellion; one result of the soulstealing affair was that it led to investigations that uncovered a revival of the millenarian "Effortless Action" sect, a Buddhist group which based its claims to authority on possession of Ming era "rebellious sayings." Its leaders were put to death by slow slicing; many acolytes were beheaded. Whether the sect really posed much threat to Manchu dominance seems doubtful, though, and it is possible to argue that Hungli might have made more progress had he paid less attention to sedition and more to his history – for the truth was that the 1768 scare was not the first time that the empire had been troubled by reports of hair-clipping.



Emperor Hungli arrives at Su-chou on the Grand Canal during his Southern Inspection Tour of 1751.

In fact, the earliest hair-cutting panic that we know of date all the way back to 477, during the chaotic Northern and Southern Dynasties period. There was another in about 517, and in the latter case, the scare apparently persisted in the

face of Dowager Empress Ling's attempts to calm the situation by ordering that anyone found guilty of hair-clipping should be "whipped without the Gate of the Thousand Autumns by the good care of Liu T'eng, the chief of the guards." The chronicles of the time attribute both of these upheavals not to rebels, but to "fox-elves" – malicious spirits that continue to play a leading role in Chinese folklore even today. Similarly, fear of flying paper men, animated by magicians, can be traced back at least as far as 1577, and numerous other queue-clipping panics broke out in China after Hungli's time – in 1810, 1812, 1821, 1844, 1876 (when a master-sorcerer supposed to live on remote Nine Dragons Mountain was reported to be planning to animate 70,000 paper men in service of the White Lotus, another millennial sect that had been stirring up trouble since the 1330s), and lastly in Amoy, in 1886. Traces of a similar contagion reappeared as late as 1910, only two years before the final collapse of the empire itself. On this last occasion, it was discovered that popular resistance to the taking of a census had its roots in fears that the authorities would use the names they took for soulstealing, either to sell them to foreigners or to aid in railway construction (in a clear echo of the old folk beliefs that had bedevilled the unfortunate mason Wu, it was thought that laying the sleepers and bridges of the new technology required one soul for every five feet of track.) Hair-clipping, in short, had a long history in China quite independent of the Manchus' efforts to impose a single hairstyle on their subjects, and belief in soulstealing sorcerers not only antedated the foundation of the Qing dynasty, but very probably outlived it.

For Hungli, though, the queue-clipping panic was simply too serious to write off as a product of popular belief. Still convinced that potential rebels were working hand in hand with master-sorcerers and wandering monks, he subjected his governors and magistrates to two more months of what Kuhn terms "vermillion abuse," firing off orders that suspicious characters who appeared at temples and pilgrimage spots were to be arrested on sight, and rounding up geomancers and faith healers wherever they were to be found. Interrogations were no longer to be left to the local authorities, either; on the emperor's orders, suspects were to be sent on to Beijing – and even further, to the summer capital, if necessary – for questioning by members of the imperial Grand Council.

Had sedition really been at work in 1768, it is possible that these measures might have



A Chinese fox spirit (hu xian). Such entities possess the power to transform into irresistibly seductive women and – in their natural form – are easily recognisable by their nine tails.

exposed it. As it was, they served only to undermine the idea that the soulstealing affair had its roots in anything real. Led by Duke Funihan, the Grand Councillors began a series of re-interrogations of the surviving witnesses – most of whom still bore the physical and mental scares of their earlier encounters with Manchu justice. This time, however, the use of torture was eschewed, and – almost immediately – the stories that emerged began to change. A constable confessed to planting a queue end and a pair of scissors in his pack in order to prevent a monk from pressing charges for false arrest; other suspects admitted to making false accusations, and to clipping their own queues in order to claim rewards; others again insisted they had blurted out confessions under torture. Chū-cheng, the monk arrested at the beginning of the whole scare, was one of those exonerated in this way.



The Qing capital, Beijing, in 1767, the year before the soulstealing scare. This painting, by the court artist Xu Yang, shows the city's north-south axis, from Coal Mountain to the north, south via the Forbidden City, with its Gate of Heavenly Peace, to the Zhengyang Gate, at the heart of the commercial sector, at the bottom of the image.

The case of Chang-ssu, the singing beggar, and his son also came before the Grand Council. Rather than confirm his story of having been recruited to clip queues by a tall stranger, though, Chang-ssu now said that he had got into an argument with the headman of the village where he had run into trouble in the first place. Angered to be offered no more than half a piece of steamed bread – to be shared with his son – he had insulted and abused the chief, who had responded by framing him, planting evidence of severed queue-ends in his bag and then summoning the village

constables. Interrogated several times, the beggar stuck determinedly to this new story, even though – as the court could hardly help but notice – he was by now on the verge of death, his whole body “yellow and swollen” and his legs infected as a result of the torture he had suffered. These exchanges thus proved little other than that soulstealing rumours were ubiquitous at the time, and the dying Chang-ssu’s story was confirmed by inspection of his few possessions; the scissors that had been planted on him were too blunt to sever hair, and the pack of “stupefying powder” in his pack was found to have no effect.

All these discoveries were highly embarrassing, and they placed the Grand Councillors in a delicate position. It now seemed certain that the soulstealing panic was a product of an unsavoury mix of envy, greed, score-settling, and hasty and incompetent investigation by local officials. But to point this out to the emperor was to risk all but accusing Hungli himself of

being gullible. It took a while to work out how best to resolve the matter, and it was not until late October 1768 – by which time the imperial household was on its way back to Beijing and its cooler autumn – that a new narrative was finally put in place by the Grand Council. In this version of events, the real trouble had been caused not by sorcery, but by an over-liberal use of torture – a form of words that offered the emperor a convenient escape. Hungli was encouraged to spare himself embarrassment by concluding that the whole farrago had indeed been a case of sedition, but in an unexpected way – local Han Chinese magistrates had deliberately incited an unjust crackdown in order to stir up hatred of officialdom, and hence of Manchu government in general.



The soulstealing affair in miniature: a Chinese constable escorts his prisoner to jail.

This Orwellian circumlocution saved imperial face, albeit at the cost of several promising careers; at least two of the local officials responsible for the initial investigations into soulstealing were dismissed from their posts and packed off to unpleasant postings in distant provinces. On the whole, however, Hungli proved himself to be merciful; whatever the emperor's deficiencies, he at least recognised that it was hardly fair to blame his men for being over-zealous when their zealotry was a response to his own vermillion anxieties.

The same mercy was shown to the unfortunate victims of the scare – or at least to the handful who survived. There was no happy ending for Chang-ssu; the unlucky beggar died in prison of his wounds not long after giving evidence. But he was provided with a coffin, and buried by the state; and his

young son was given an escort home to an impoverished countryside no longer seething with rumours of soulstealing, but a little bit more crowded, and a little bit more impoverished, than it had been before.

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A note on names

Because almost all the significant English language sources dealing with the soulstealing campaign follow the Wade-Giles system of transliteration, rather than the more recent Pinyin system, and because I am no expert in transliteration myself, I have found it safer to write this essay using Wade-Giles – using Pinyin only when Wade-Giles is likely to cause needless confusion (Beijing for Peking, Qing dynasty for Ch’ing). This does mean some place names become hard to identify for anyone used to the Pinyin system. Some equivalents are given below.

Wade-Giles	Pinyin
An-chi County	Anji County
Anhui	Anhui
Hai-chow	Haizhou
Hangchow	Hangzhou
Hsiao-chen County	Xiaozhen County
Hupei	Hubei
Hsu-chow	Xuzhou
Hu-hsien	Hu xian
Jen-ho	Renhe
Kiangnan	Jiangnan
Kiangsi	Jiangxi
Kiangsu	Jiangsu
Liankiang province	Lianxiang province
Shantung	Shandong
Su-chow	Suzhou
Taoism, Taoist	Daoism, Daoist
Te’ching	Deqing

Pinyin

2 thoughts on “Sorcerers and soulstealers: hair-cutting panics in old China”



1. Bloat

30 May 2016 at 4:05 pm

Fascinating post, as always. I was especially interested by something a little bit off topic, your mention of the magical flying machines of Ma Ch’ao-chu. Was this a real rebellion, or just another sort of rumour?



Mike Dash

30 May 2016 at 8:42 pm

Ma Ch’ao-chu (Ma Chaozhu in Pinyin) was a real rebel, though his activities took place far away from the centre of Manchu China, and word of his activities was censored – so details of his rebellion remain scanty. The most complete account I’ve seen of his activities is a short passage in WT Rowe’s *Crimson Rain – Seven Centuries of Violence in a Chinese County*. It stresses Ma’s reliance on the supernatural to reinforce his message:

The second event was the mid-eighteenth century rebellion of Ma Chao-zhu. Ma hailed from eastern Hubei's Qizhou Prefecture, along the perennially troubled Anhui border. His uprising reprised various themes that we have already encountered, including Ming loyalism, Manichaeism, millenarianism, and demonic messianism. Like Macheng's rebels of the Three Feudatories era, Ma claimed to hold a commission from a separatist regime in the southwest, heir to that of Wu Sangui. The rebellion generated there, however, would be not only Ming-restorationist but also apocalyptic; it would be led by a world-saving King of Light (Ming wang) akin to those prophesied in the fourteenth century by Peng Yingyu and Zou Pusheng. Like Golden Dragon Huang in the 1670s, Ma brandished a letter from Heaven (*tianshu*) and a precious sword (*baojian*) as symbols of his legitimacy. But he also claimed to have discovered in the mountain grottoes of his native region various exorcist items—mirrors, amulets, tablets—that would enable him to exterminate the demon hordes (that is, the Qing) currently plaguing the world. To this end as well, he summoned spirit armies (*shenbing*) from the four cardinal directions, armies composed of soldiers who had suffered violent deaths in battle. Mounting his rebellion initially along the Anhui border, he fought his way westward until, in 1749, he occupied a network of mountain forts in the Dongshan, along Macheng's eastern border with Luotian. But that is where he stalled. Prevented by local militia from making effective headway into Macheng itself and beyond, Ma's rebellion dissipated in 1752, and he himself disappeared without a trace.²⁶

Extract from Crimson Rain

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China under the Manchus, showing the empire's growth between 1644 and 1800. The soulstealing panic took place along the country's eastern coast, between the Yangtze and Beijing. Click to view in larger resolution.

ssu's later confession – they were accosted by a tall man whom they did not know. The stranger asked them what they did for a living and, on hearing that they begged, he offered them employment – 500 cash for every peasant pigtail they could clip. (The cash was the imperial currency at the time; 500 cash was worth approximately half an ounce of silver.) The stranger refused to tell Chang-ssu and his son what he wanted the hair for, but he did offer them some help: a pair of scissors and a small packet of powder which, he explained, was a “stupefying drug.” Sprinkle the powder on the head of a victim and he would fall to the ground insensible. Then his pigtail – or queue – could easily be clipped.

The work sounded easy enough, and Chang-ssu accepted the commission – so he said. He and the stranger parted, making arrangements to meet up again later on the border with a neighbouring province, and father and son continued on their way, making for the city of Su-chou. In the course of their journey, at a village named Chao, they tried the stupefying powder on a local labourer. Gratifyingly, the man collapsed; Chang-ssu took out his scissors, snipped off the end of the man's queue, and tucked scissors and the hair in his travelling pack. The beggars did not get far, however. Only a mile or two outside the village they were overtaken by a group of constables, arrested and hauled off to the county jail – suspected, they were told, of the vile crime of soulstealing.



A Chinese barber shaves a customer's forehead and trims his queue. This hairstyle – and its imposition on all male Chinese subjects by the Manchu emperors – lay at the heart of the great soulstealing scare.

Perhaps Chang-ssu ought to have guessed that he was doing something very dangerous. The idea that a sorcerer could use magic spells to separate the human soul from the body was commonplace in Chinese culture, and so was the notion that chanting spells over a sample of the victim's hair was the surest way to sever that bond. Once the spells were recited, it was believed, the detached soul fell under the power of the sorcerer, and it could then be used for all sorts of mischief. Most obviously, it could be used to give life to inanimate objects, for example little paper images of animals or men. These animated paper men could then be used as bodyguards, or dispatched to do the sorcerer's bidding – whether that was stealing from somebody's house, or committing murder. The victim in the whole affair, meanwhile, was doomed to die. Once his soul had been stolen, he would sicken and eventually expire, a crime rendered still more serious by the Chinese belief that it was vital that the living members of a clan say prayers for the departed dead. The killing of a father or an elder son could thus be catastrophic for many

generations of a family.

China's soulstealing tradition was a complex one, and it was surrounded by a great deal of folklore. Children, for example, were said to be the most favoured victims – though whether that was because they possessed more life force, or posed less threat, is difficult to say. Each clipped queue was supposed to be sufficient to animate three paper men, and these sorcerers' servants had considerable powers; they could fly, and even travel into the afterlife, where they would assume human form and serve as the retainers and concubines of the dead. Some of the drugs used to secure the queues were said to render their users invisible, rather than their victims insensible. And there were peculiar beliefs as to how the occult bond forged between a sorcerer and his stolen souls might best be severed in time to save his hapless victims. In one account, paper men could be paralysed by contact with a woman's urine; in another, the only way of saving a victim's soul was said to be to snip off another hank of his hair and leave it to soak in a cesspool for 80 days. As for the paper men themselves, later accounts describe them as about 5 inches long, bearing charms – 'fly', 'hide', 'thunder', 'lightning' – on their thighs and feet, and equipped with miniature pairs of paper scissors.



An 18th century drawing of the town of Te'ching. The watergate where all the trouble started can be seen on the right.

The 1768 scare had got its start four or five months before Chang-ssu was dragged off to be interrogated at Su-chou, and it flared up in Chenkiang county, at the mouth of the Yangtze, in the richest part of pre-industrial China. The area lay at the heart of the silk industry – the empire's richest manufactory – and it was (Philip A. Kuhn explains) one vast, rich mulberry garden, stretching across a floodplain laced with creeks, canals and low, soft hills. The first flickers of rumour came from the town of Te-ching, just north of Hangchow on Nant'io river, where in the autumn of 1767 the

local authorities asked several local masons to bid on a large contract: the replacement of the watergate on the town's eastern wall.

Three masons pitched for the job, but it was awarded to only one of them, a man by the name of Wu Tung-ming. His men started work in January, but the job proved very difficult. It took until March to sink the piles needed to support the new gate, and when Wu set off for his home village to secure fresh supplies of rice, whispers had already begun to circulate that the masons would need to call on supernatural aid to finish up the work.

Qing-era masons were frequently associated with magic. The heavy labour that such men did, in an era before the invention of mechanical aids, required so much arduous effort that it seemed natural that they would choose to call on sorcery from time to time, and it was commonly believed that they might, at least occasionally, resort to soulstealing techniques in order to complete tasks that were otherwise impossible. In this sort of case, it was believed, masons would set out to discover people's names, write those names down on slips of paper, and then pin those slips to their piles. Soulstealing magic would then be used to lend additional spiritual power to the force of the masons' blows. Of course, the same

magic would simultaneously sap the victims' strength, and would eventually kill them.



Peasants work the fields outside a Qing-era village. This sanitised scene gives little clue as to the drudgery of most peasants' lives.

Stories of masons stealing souls seem to have been fairly common at this time; they were certainly widely enough known for a man in Wu's home village of Jen-ho to have heard about them. His name was Shen Shih-liang, he was 43 years old, and he was living in considerably reduced circumstances – forced to move in with his nephews in a family compound. Once there, Shen found himself the target of regular abuse; his young relatives bullied him, stole his money, and even insulted his mother. Enraged, he travelled to a local Buddhist temple, where he burned a paper petition before the altar by way of filing his complaint with the King of the

Underworld. Then he sought out mason Wu and offered up his nephews' names for soulstealing.

Wu was too uncaring – or perhaps just much too sensible – to take Shen up on this unusual proposal. But he was also fully alive to the likely consequences of simply letting the matter drop, only for rumours of the conversation to begin to circulate. Instead, he reported the whole matter to the village headman, and he had Shen arrested and carted off to Te-ch'ing for interrogation. There the city magistrate settled things by sentencing Shen to 25 strokes of the cane. Considering the options that were open to him – which included torturing the peasant for further information, and even sentencing him to death – this was little more than exemplary punishment. It's hard to imagine that the magistrate, a well-educated mandarin who was the imperial government's local man on the ground, set much store by peasant superstitions, or genuinely believed that it was possible to steal souls.

The same cannot be said for all the people of Te-ch'ing. Shen's case must have attracted notice; certainly the idea that there might be real soulstealers about began to circulate throughout the town, and it was not long before a second incident occurred. This time it took place in the provincial capital, Hangchow, but the case involved a Te-ch'ing man called Chi Chao-mei. Chi was attempting to make his living as a beggar when his rustic accent attracted the unwelcome attentions of some Hangchow louts. When they realised where he came from, things quickly turned ugly, and Chi was accused of being a soulstealer, sent out from Te-ch'ing to ensnare the unwary people of the capital. To save himself from a lynching, the beggar blurted an admission the charge, adding, in his panic, that he had made use of some paper charms to kill two children in the city. Hauled off to the provincial *yamen* (government office), Chi named mason Wu as his accomplice.

It's worth pausing for a moment here to wonder why the Te-ch'ing hair-cutting scare broke out where it did and when it did – and why the Chinese government eventually took it so seriously that the emperor himself took charge of the investigation. The answer to these questions is a



Manchu bannermen charge at the Battle of Qurman, fought in Turkestan in 1759.

complex one, and we need to go back to the early 1640s to begin to grasp it. At that time, the Ming – an ethnically Han Chinese dynasty – had ruled

the country for very nearly three centuries, but their state was in terminal decline. It also faced a fearsome enemy to the north in the shape of the Manchus, a nomad people who had built an empire of their own on the far side of the Great Wall. In 1644, his position undermined by a rebellion of peasants, the last Ming emperor hanged himself from a tree behind his palace; the Manchus promptly attacked, slaughtered a Chinese army, and installed themselves as rulers in Beijing.

The new Qing dynasty took some time to establish itself, however, and even then the Manchus remained heavily outnumbered by their new subjects. Successive Qing emperors – no matter how successful they appeared to be – lived in constant apprehension of the two things they thought might spell disaster for their dynasty. The first was Han sedition, and the second the assimilation of what they saw as their own sturdy, martial race into the lazy, dangerously corrupt civilization to the south.



Qing officials arresting members of the White Lotus, a Buddhist secret society

Rebellion, the Manchus thought, was likely to be sparked by popular religion. Both China's Taoists and its Buddhists spawned sects over which the state had no control; these often splintered into semi-political secret societies, and spread word of their activities via networks of wandering monks – the very people who would soon become chief suspects in the soulstealing affair. Assimilation, meanwhile, was best resisted by maintaining clear distinctions between Manchu and Chinese. To this end, the first Qing emperor decreed that all his new subjects were to adopt a distinctive hairstyle – one that denoted their inferior rank.

This involved shaving the forehead clean, while growing the hair at the back of the head long and braiding it neatly into a queue. By the 1760s, the style had been in vogue for several generations, and had it had morphed into something of a badge of pride for the great majority of Chinese men; to loose one's queue, or

even a part of it, symbolised loss of honour and restraint. For the Manchus, though, clipped queues were something far more serious. To sever a queue was to commit one of the “Ten Abominations” set out in China’s criminal code. It was an act of rebellion, one that could be, and was, punished by the execution not only of the queue-cutter, but also of his entire family. The theft of hair was, therefore, a matter of the utmost seriousness for Hungli’s subjects, and this explains why fear of supernatural hair-cutters spread so rapidly through the China of 1768.

By the time the soulstealing panic began to spread along the Grand Canal, which linked Beijing to the Yangtze, the emperor had already been alarmed by two earlier cases of supposed sedition that seemed to him to have the potential to wreak havoc in his carefully-ordered realm. The first was the “Case of the Bogus Memorial,” which took place in 1751; a document, purporting to be a report harshly critical of the imperial administration which had been addressed to Hungli by one of his most trusted advisors, began circulating throughout the empire. Badly frightened by the memorial’s appearance even in the heart of the Manchu state – copies had turned up as close to home as the Bannermen’s Academy in Beijing, which trained the empire’s senior soldiers – Hungli was glad to pin the blame for the memorial on a minor military official. The supposed culprit was executed by slow slicing (the infamous punishment also known as the “death by a thousand cuts”), and the seriousness with which the emperor took the case is well illustrated by the fact that though “even the coolies in the street” were apparently well aware of the humiliating accusations that the Bogus Memorial contained, not a single copy is known to survive today in even the deepest recesses of the imperial archives.



Martial race: a Manchu bannerman – a member of one of the eight great companies of warriors that underpinned the Qing state – painted to illustrate his noble qualities. Though cultured and literate (witness the tea and the writing materials at his elbow), he is also a vigorous warrior, happiest on horseback.

The second case to alarm Hungli was considerably stranger, and indeed it can be seen as a telling precursor to the soulstealing affair. It involved an apparent anti-Manchu conspiracy that flared up in the mountains of rural Hupei, where in 1752 various rebel proclamations were uncovered, along with stocks of newly-forged swords. These were apparently the work of one Ma Ch’ao-chu, a Yangtze valley peasant who claimed to be an agent of the deposed Ming dynasty. That news, in itself, would have been alarming enough, but according to the rumours that reached Beijing, Ma Ch’ao-chu was merely the servant of a far more potent threat: a “Young Lord” who ruled over a “Kingdom of the Western Sea” somewhere in the mountains south-west of the Chinese border. This ideal ruler of a paradisiacal Ming successor state controlled an army of 36,000 men – and they were preparing to descend on the rich and disloyal southern provinces of the Manchu empire in magical flying machines, which could carry them from their mountain fastnesses into the heart of Hungli’s dominions in a matter of hours.

The Manchus expended vast resources in an attempt to catch the mysterious Ma Ch’ao-chu, but he was never apprehended. As in the case of the Bogus Memorial, however, Hungli reacted violently to even the whiff of

sedition; orders went out from Beijing that all the suspects rounded up were to be “tortured with extreme severity,” and that their lives were to be preserved only until they confessed. Most tellingly, the authorities also seem to have suppressed reports that the Hupei rebels were cutting off their queues. Fifteen years before the outbreak of the soulstealing affair, the emperor was already obsessed by the dangers of such a visible rebuke to his authority.

Seen in such worrying contexts, the soulstealing affair takes on rather different dimensions; it becomes easier to see beyond its outlandish – even quasi-comical – origins and discern, with Hungli, a movement with the potential to create real trouble for the empire. Whether or not he ever actually believed in the possibility of soulstealing (something that it is difficult to know for sure), Hungli was certainly convinced that popular disturbances of any sort should be suppressed as rapidly as possible. He was also alive to the dangers posed by any segment of the population that was difficult to enumerate or control. And it is at this point that we need to turn to the problem of wandering monks.



Wandering monks and Buddhist pilgrims were a staple of eastern societies for generations – this old photograph comes from Japan. They carried basic necessities in packs, and though this man seems considerably better equipped than most, even poorer mendicants might possess items such as scissors, needle and thread.

Buddhist and Taoist monasteries dotted the landscape of Qing-era China like the pustules of an especially vigorous case of chicken pox. A few were rich; most were poor; but, together, they acted not only as religious centres (ones that were, in Hungli’s eyes, infuriatingly beyond the close control of the Manchu state) but also as a sort of social safety-net. At a time when the rapid increases in China’s population were beginning to bear down heavily on many impoverished people, it was common for those who found themselves surplus to requirements on a family’s land, and those elderly who had no children to support them, to throw themselves on the mercy of the local monastery or nunnery. The surest way of doing so was to become a monk or nun. Those capable of pursuing a religious vocation all the way through to ordination had claim upon their monastery’s resources; even for the great majority who did not (and by the 1760s only 20 percent of China’s clergy possessed ordination certificates), begging became considerably more lucrative if one was a monk.

The result was that China’s roads were thick with religious novices, almost all of them poorly educated and most at best sketchily aware of the chief tenets of their own religions. These monks were a perpetual thorn in the side of the administration; it was hard to distinguish between them and bandits or petty criminals on the run.

The poorest ostentatiously displayed running sores and abscesses, not so much in an appeal for sympathy as in the expectation that they would be paid to move on before they could infect anyone else; the better-educated were if anything an even bigger threat. Lumped together, in the common phrase, as “sorcerous Taoists and licentious Buddhists,” the latter were commonly associated with every sort of magic, from alchemy and exorcism to the search for immortality – making them logical suspects in any search for the perpetrators of “evil acts.” Either way, as Kuhn points out, “to the bureaucratic mind, wandering beggars of any sort threatened public security. People without homes and families were out of control.”



*A prisoner is tortured in the ankle-press. From Mason & Dadley's *The Punishments of China* (1901).*

Back in Hangchow, in 1768, the soulstealing scare was taking on a life of its own. Chi Chao-mei, the beggar who had desperately accused mason Wu of soulstealing in an attempt to prevent his own lynching, was quickly exposed as a liar once he was hauled before the town magistrates; unable to pick out Wu from a lineup, he eventually admitted to having invented his entire story. But any hope that this confession might damp down the rising panic was more

than offset by news of yet another case, this one from across the river in Hsiao-chen county, where two wandering monks with unfamiliar accents had got talking to a local boy and unwisely asked his name. Convinced that the strangers were soulstealers – names, as we have seen, possessed a magical power of their own – a mob chased the monks out of their village, howling “Burn them!” and “Drown them!” as they ran. The village headman was able to calm things down only by having both men seized, together with two of their travelling companions. All four were sent to the local *yamen*, where their bags were searched. One, a novice named Chū-cheng, was found to be carrying three pairs of scissors and a piece of braided queue. That was enough for the magistrates; they put the monks to the torture.

Torture was a common feature of Chinese law in those days. Several different devices were used; the two most common were the “leg-crusher” and the “ankle-press.” The latter, which was apparently the implement used on the wandering monks, was described by one western witness as a “sort of double wooden vice” consisting of three beams; chocks were hammered in, causing two to act as levers on the third, inflicting agonising multiple fractures on the ankle and shinbone. Hardly surprisingly, the press quickly wrung full confessions from the hapless monks, and the unease that this news produced was exacerbated by a separate incident in which a tinker who had been carrying two (entirely conventional) written charms was beaten to death by an illiterate mob who assumed that he, too, was a soulstealer.

Similar cases now began to occur in other districts. A stranger found wandering through An-chi County was tied to a tree and beaten to death; a barber who had clipped the queue of a 10-year-old boy who had heard of the soulstealing scare, and apparently wanted the thrill of claiming that he was a victim of it, had his legs broken in the ankle-press. By May 1768, cases were streaming in from neighbouring Kiangsu province, where yet another group of wandering monks had been arrested.

Perhaps the local authorities remembered the case of Ma Ch’ao-chu, the rebel who had claimed to be merely the representative of a vastly more powerful threat to the Manchu state; perhaps they took note of the testimony of Chang-ssu, who said he had been supplied with scissors and stupefying drugs by a mysterious stranger; perhaps they simply found it hard to



A scene at a county yamen. On the lower left, two convicts have been placed in cages and left to die of starvation. On the lower right, two others have been placed in the cangue, a sort of Chinese stocks.

believe that semi-literate wandering monks and beggars were capable of stealing souls without somebody's help. Whatever the truth, it was not long before hard questioning produced evidence that there was a real conspiracy afoot – and that master-sorcerers were lurking in the shadows, recruiting and manipulating the hapless mendicants who had actually been arrested.

According to one such testimony, a poor hired labourer by the name of Li had been enslaved by a sorcerer whom he called “Baldy Liu”; Liu had accosted him as he rested under a tree, sprinkled him with stupefying powder, and ordered him to “make obeisance to him as master” before sending him off to clip queues. According to another, a sorcerer-monk by the name of Ming-yuan was behind much of the trouble in Shantung province. Put to the torture, one especially persuasive beggar – a failed doctor by the name of Han P’ei-hsien – recounted that he had heard of the marvels performed by Ming-yuan in the course of his wanderings, and travelled to meet him at the Three Teachings Temple in Hai-chou. Ming-yuan had welcomed him, assured him that he had “plenty of techniques,” and invited him to

become his disciple.



A well-patronised Buddhist temple on Wutai Mountain. Most temples were less magnificent and considerably poorer than this one.

Ming-yuan – Han P’ei-hsien’s confession went on – displayed his mastery of magic by filling a bronze bowl with water, sprinkling the surface with a strange powder, and commanding that he wash his face in it. “Then he wrapped a white cloth to cover my eyes, whereupon I saw lofty towers, elegant rooms ... gold and silver treasures, all manner of high-class things.” Suitably convinced, the beggar eagerly agreed to Ming-yuan’s proposal that he help him to obtain “ten-thousand queues in order to ... build a ten-thousand soul bridge.” The queues, the monk explained, would be put to use by “filling seven large earthen jars with them, reciting incantations over them for seven times seven days, then daubing them with the blood of living persons.” This magic would turn paper cut-outs snipped from “five-colour paper” into full-sized paper men, who could then be sent out to rob victims of their possessions. Supplied with 500 cash and packets of stupefying drugs – again, according to his testimony –

Han P’ei-hsien was packed off to clip queues. He managed to waylay two youths and snip their pigtails, but when he tried the trick for a third time, he was caught and hauled off for interrogation.

It’s not difficult to see how a detailed story, packed with names and places like Han P’ei-hsien’s, could convince Manchu magistrates that they were uncovering a substantial conspiracy. Nonetheless, local officials faced considerable difficulties in pursuing their investigations. For one thing, they dared not make their enquiries public, for fear of causing greater panic; for another, the discreet investigations that they did make repeatedly

NJ Psychic Scammed \$41K From Woman for Spirit-Removal Service: Police

Published at 2:03 PM EDT on May 19, 2016

nbcnewyork.com



Psychic Holly Stanley is charged with theft by deception.

Her customer became suspicious when told it would take another \$90,000 to get rid of the unwanted spirits



Chasing unwanted spirits away from a New Jersey woman apparently couldn't be accomplished for \$41,000, so when the psychic asked for an additional \$90,000 to do the job, her customer balked, police said Thursday.

Paramus detectives are treating it as a scam and say it all began with a \$100 crystal ball reading.

Holly Stanley, 25, who operates as a psychic out of a Paramus office, told the 30-year-old woman who sought her advice that the crystal ball revealed that spirits were interfering with her life, detectives said.

The woman paid \$5,000 for removal of the spirits in March, they said.



Top Tri-State News Photos

After several more sessions, Stanley apparently told the woman that the spirits were "rather stubborn" and it would take another \$36,000 to get rid of them. The woman paid, detectives said.

Last month, Stanley told the woman that she needed still more cash to deal with the unwanted spirits. Her spirit-disposal services would run another \$90,000, detectives

said.

"After several days, the victim became suspicious of Ms. Stanley and reported this to the

Paramus Police Department," said Chief Kenneth Ehrenberg.

Officers arrested Stanley, an East Rutherford resident, and charged her with theft by deception. She was released on \$5,000 bail.

Stanley told NBC 4 New York Thursday evening the exchange of cash was a loan.

"This was friendship," she said. "I have a written contract in ink for a loan."

When asked to elaborate, she said: "I'd like all of this nonsense to stop."

Then she hung up the phone.

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Much ridiculed spoon-bending workshop nixed by university

2016/06/03

cbc.ca

CBC
CBCnews
cbc masthead logo**93.9**
radio one
host picture**'There is absolutely no physical way you can bend a spoon with your mind'**

By Mack Lamoureux, CBC News Posted: Jun 03, 2016 7:00 PM MT Last Updated: Jun 03, 2016 7:16 PM MT



"There is absolutely no physical way you can bend a spoon with your mind," Timothy Caulfield said. "That's why it's so frustrating that it's being presented in this legitimate way at a science-based institution." (Gamma Mindset)

After a healthy dose of online ridicule, the University of Alberta has cancelled a workshop at which doctors were supposed to learn to bend spoons.

With their minds.

When Tim Caulfield first spotted a poster for the event, he didn't understand what he was seeing.

"When I first saw the post I thought it might be a magic show," said the professor of health law and science policy at U of A. "But this wasn't being presented as that, or as satire, it was being presented as a real event where you're supposed to use the power of your mind to bend spoons."

The seminar, titled simply "Spoon Bending and the Power of the Mind," was arranged by the university's Complementary and Alternative Research and Education program or CARE, as part of the Pediatric Integrative Medicine Rounds, a series of monthly seminars presenting a specialist in the field of integrative medicine to a clinical audience.



Anastasia Kutt claims to be an energy healing therapist who teaches workshops such as reiki, spoon bending, and tantra. (Facebook)

When Caulfield heard about event, he immediately tweeted about it causing many on social media to ridicule the workshop and the university.

It was to be taught by Anastasia Kutt, an Edmonton "energy healer" who specializes

in reiki, a form of therapy in which the practitioner is believed to channel energy into the patient in order to encourage healing.

On her website, Kutt said she "has been studying [and] experiencing techniques such as yoga, meditation, and other energy healing techniques for over 10 years."

"When I first saw the post I thought it might be a magic show." - Timothy Caulfield

Her website explains energy healing as "removing issues and stress from your energetic field, to bring it into balance and its original state of good health."

She has taught similar seminars on spoon bending, also described as PK bending — psychokinesis bending.

Kutt is also a research assistant in the CARE program and co-ordinates the education arm of the program.

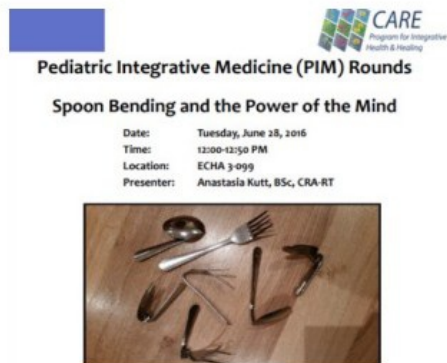
The poster boasts that at the end of the day, 75 per cent of the doctors, with guidance from Kutt, would be able to bend spoons solely with their minds.

It's a notion that Caulfield, along with many others online, scoffed at.

• **Trending story | Spoon bending' workshop for doctors withdrawn at University of Alberta**

"Spoon bending is kind of ironic because it's been debunked so often," said Caulfield.

"There is absolutely no physical way you can bend a spoon with your mind. That's why it's so frustrating that it's being presented in this legitimate way at a science-based institution."



The poster for the spoon-bending workshop that Tim Caulfield posted on Twitter. (Twitter)

The event poster featured the disclaimer that states, "This workshop is experiential and is meant to spark interest. This will not be a scientific evaluation of the process."

The University of Alberta released a statement saying the workshop had "been withdrawn by the presenters."

It added that the event was "about reiki and other energy therapies, highlighting how and why patients and therapists use it ... acknowledging that there is a lack of evidence about how, and how well, it works."

'Embrace of pseudoscience'

For Caulfield, the issue is that programs like CARE lend legitimacy to these sorts of ideas, something he doesn't believe an institute of higher learning should do.



Timothy Caulfield, professor of health law & science policy at U of A, was a catalyst in getting the spoon bending event cancelled. (Twitter)

"That's my sort of umbrella concern with this," Caulfield said. "Is these kind of programs legitimize the pseudo-science. The problem is, it always sort of slides into the embrace of pseudo-science."

"It's always presented in a legitimate fashion. You don't have that critical component to it, you're working arm in arm with energy healers, reiki experts and homeopathy practitioners."

He said he's not sure what exact role the University of Alberta played in the organization, but it doesn't matter anyway. The poster featured the university's logo, which links the event directly to the institution.

"It really does seem like they are part of academia and that, to me, is problematic."

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Wednesday, 27 April 2016



Of all the vast company of saints peculiar to Cornwall, St. Neot is surely the strangest, for he was, so the old traditions have it, a pigmy, perfectly formed, yet only fifteen inches in height. There are very many stories told of this tiny holy man, and most of them seem to show that he wielded a great power over all animals.

One of the prettiest stories is of the time when St. Neot presided over his abbey and there came one night thieves to the monastic farm and stole all the monks' plough oxen. The poor brothers had not the money to purchase other beasts, and seed-time was upon them with their fields yet unploughed. Ruin seemed certain until the good little abbot appealed to the wild beasts to come to their aid. And then, to

the amazement of the monks, there came from the surrounding forests wild stags, who docilely offered their necks to the yoke and drew the heavy ploughs. Each night the stags were released, and they went off to the woods; but each succeeding morning they returned to continue their task.

The news of this miraculous happening spread rapidly abroad and came at last to the ears of the thieves. They were so deeply impressed by the story that they returned the stolen oxen at once and promised never again to pursue their evil ways. So the stags were released from their self-appointed labour, but ever after, they say, each bore a white ring like a yoke about its neck, and each enjoyed a charmed life, for no arrow or spear of a hunter could hurt it.

Another story that is told is that of St. Neot and the hunted doe. While the good saint was seated in contemplation by his well, there burst from the woods a doe pursued by hounds and huntsmen. The poor beast was exhausted and sank down by the saint as if imploring his protection.

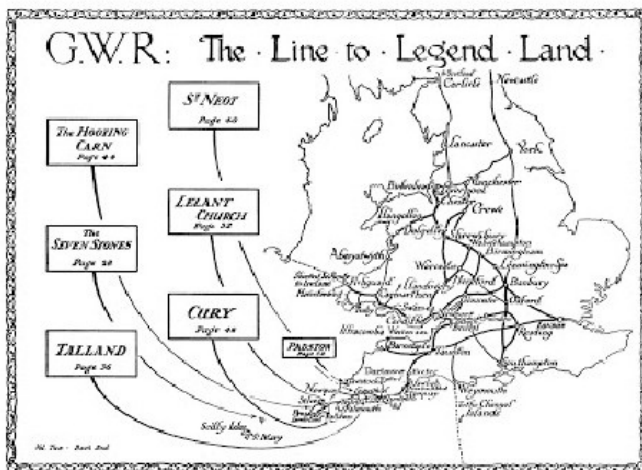
The tiny saint rose and faced the oncoming pack, which instantly turned and dashed back into the forest. Presently the huntsmen approached with drawn bows, prepared to dispatch the frightened quarry. But they too, at the sight of the saint, desisted, and the chief of them, falling upon his knees, cast away his quiver and besought the Holy Neot to receive him into the Church.

This man, they say, became a monk at the monastery of St. Petroc at Bodmin, and the hunting-horn which he carried on the day of his conversion was hung for many years in St. Neot's church. Many of the stories of this saint are depicted in the mediæval stained-glass windows of the parish church of St. Neot, a pretty village nestling under the southern slopes of the Bodmin Moor. This church has one of the finest sets of fifteenth and sixteenth century painted windows in the country, which rival the famous Fairford glass in Gloucestershire.

St. Neot is easily reached by road from Bodmin or Liskeard, or from Doublebois station, on the main line, from which it is distant about three miles. The village lies in a sheltered valley surrounded by charming wooded country, and from it you may reach, only a short distance away, the edge of wild Bodmin Moor itself.

Bodmin, an attractive yet—by the tourist—much neglected town, is some seven miles away. Bodmin, the capital of Cornwall, is a quiet, sleepy old town ideally situated as a centre from which to reach many parts of the Duchy. Midway between the two coasts, with a good rail service to either, and close to the wild moorland that bears its name, this town is rich in history.

The moor with its two Cornish mountains, Brown Willy and Rough Tor (which you must pronounce to rhyme with "plough"), is easily reached, and the rail will take you to Wadebridge or Padstow on the rugged north coast; or south to sheltered Fowey—the Troy Town of "Q"—for an afternoon's excursion.



From The Line to Legend Land published by Great Western Railways in 1922

Posted by Alex Langstone at 23:48

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Thomas the Apostle's Silver Coins in India | Historic Mysteries

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HISTORIC MYSTERIES

Historic Mysteries

Paula Gruber April 17,
2015 Editorials



Towards the end of the Second World War, my father Johann Gruber, a German school teacher was hiding in Portugal and working under an assumed name along with a well-known spy named Joan Pujol Garcia translating German communication for the allies. During his years in Lisbon, he heard rumors of the survival and existence of some coins from the infamous Biblical thirty pieces of silver that Judas Iscariot had allegedly received in exchange for the arrest of Jesus as is narrated in the Bible. Though a little girl then, I would remember the rumor my father spoke of for many years and particularly the reference to a place called "Malabar" and "Goa" on the west coast of India. It was a

favorite topic of conversation for some time for our devoted Catholic family. Later in my 30s, trialing and trailing the "hippy" culture, I headed for Goa along with a boyfriend. Following a lead and a friend's advice, I landed a few weeks later at Cannanore on the Malabar coast in Kerala. Through some contacts in the local catholic parishes I visited a village in Cannanore called Cheru Kunnu where I was shown four silver coins by an old lady named Parukutty. She referred to the coins as "Rakta Velli" or blood silver. The story of the four coins so astounded me, that I found it too preposterous to believe and wondered whether I had chased a wild goose all these years. But more surprises were to unfold in the years to come. A brief mention is made by some websites following my revealing this story to Justine, my English translator. However here is my story of the mysterious relics called the St. Thomas coins as never reported before.



A 16th-century fresco depicting Judas being paid the thirty pieces of silver. Image credit: Wikipedia.

I first reported this story in 2005 in Germany, after traveling to Kerala, India on three occasions. Since then, my friend Justine has posted a brief version of the story on some websites. It had raised many controversies then and I have for many years been both threatened and harassed by many Hindus as well as Protestant church members from India. But the truth is the truth and I cannot change it. In fact, for the record, this is the full story of the events that led me into publishing the discovery of those four coins the Hindus call the "Rakta Velli", narrated

here in greater detail.

It was actually on my initial visit to India in 1972 that I first saw the four Rakta Velli pieces. I visited the Nair Taravad (ancestral home) at Cherukunnu in the Kannur district along with a mutual acquaintance, a nun from the nearby St. Martin de Porres Hospital who was also my interpreter. (My travel out of Germany was prompted by the state of my mind. I remember I was very depressed that year following the massacre of Olympic athletes in the city and later the passing away of my mother.) Anyway, on that occasion, the story that Parukutty Amma, the old lady at the Nair Tharavad in Kerala told me, seemed ludicrous and farfetched. But the faulty perception was partially mine as I had never really believed the story that the apostle St. Thomas had visited as far east as India or even that Christians actually existed in India as early as the first century AD. Thanks to my ignorance, at first it sounded nonsensical because I reasoned that neither the Romans nor for that matter any substantial community even within Judea had converted to Christianity as early as that. They would probably still be recovering from the shock of the crucifixion. To be told that a contemporary of Christ himself had established many churches in Kerala about 1,950 years ago was, I could only take to be a local yarn or legend. As many Europeans still do, I believed the propagation and the spread of Christianity in India was a result of the much more recent colonization of India by Europeans such as the English, French, Dutch and Portuguese despite the nun from the local mission hospital making several attempts to convince me that I was wrong. In fact, on that visit to Parukutty's ancestral household I had not even bothered to photograph, measure or weigh these venerable coins when they were shown to me. Today I know for certain that they belong to the original thirty pieces of silver that betrayed Jesus. Whatever happened to the remaining 26? These are perhaps the most important ancient Christian relics to surface in recent times! And I had not even paid the due attention to them!

But by the year 1976, sitting in my room in Munich, I had begun to give a more serious thought to what exactly I had been shown at Parukutty's ancestral house four years ago. My curiosity had reached a highpoint for I had just returned from Lisbon where I had the opportunity to go through a private collection of very old manuscripts dated between 1690 AD and 1860 AD, recovered or rescued from Daman and Goa, India, in 1961 by one Manuel

António Vassalo e Silva, which contained details of several attempts by the Portuguese to acquire four silver coins, referred to variously as *asmoedas de prata santos*, *moedas de Tomas*, *reliquias de Tomas* and *moedas sangrentos* supposedly in the possession of some Hindu family in Malabar. There were details of arrests made, interrogations carried out and even summary executions. It is also mentioned in a *Padroado Real*, indicating that even the Pope of that time was aware of the existence of these coins. Now there was no doubt in my mind as to what the Portuguese were looking for. I longed to return to Kerala once again and visit Cherukunnu. Thus in the winter of 1976 I landed at Bombay, into a very different India from my last visit. It was as if some of Germany's afflictions had followed me there. The whole country was in some sort of curfew and my passport and travel papers were being scrutinized more often and in greater detail. The police were present in most places. I remember being warned by well-wishers not to be critical of the government or be seen carrying more cash than a regular tourist. A large number of the country's opposition as well as press reporters and foreigners were languishing in jails. The vibrant democracy I had known of that country seemed to have gone bananas!

However, I had no intention of abandoning my quest. In the very first week of that visit I had not only come to know the story of St. Thomas and his martyrdom in India, near Madras, but also that in the past, various denomination of Christians in Kerala had made attempts to acquire the four coins gifted by St. Thomas to preserve them in a church as relics. I was told by some old priests of a Catholic Church that Syrian Christians or Nasrani Christians made the most vociferous claims to the coins as early as the 1920s but that the issue took a back seat during the Malabar riots of 1921 and the matter was subsequently forgotten. According to my friend at the mission hospital, Malayalam writings of that time made several mention of the St. Thomas coins. Nehru during his prime-ministership is believed to have received a petition from a priest of Kerala to do all that he could to "restore" the coins to the Nasrani church. Nehru apparently ignored the petition as his office issued no reply.

On my second visit in the winter of 1976 I found myself in a different scenario at Cherukunnu. The beautiful ancestral house with its kolum (pool), teak-wood pillars and central courtyard was lying in a huge heap of rubble. The heavy brass fittings on the doors were being ripped off the age-old timber to be sold away. The rubble was now being used to fill the black granite-lined kolum on the steps of which Parukutty and I had sat chatting not many years ago. Trucks arrived to carry the timber and age old furniture away. I was aghast and remember shedding a few tears, much to the amusement of some family members and workers scattered around the compound. A foreigner is hardly ever seen in these parts and this time my friend, the nun from the mission hospital, could not accompany me either. I stood alone at the edge of the compound at the concrete gateway of the house the locals call a *koni*, having made it through the pathways in the paddy fields below and terrified at the thought of encountering a snake. A smaller house of common contemporary architecture had been built nearby, through the doorway of which Parukutty emerged. She smiled despite looking much older than her seventy-odd years and very weary. She was obviously ailing and had only risen from her bed on hearing of my arrival. She offered me some *prasadam* from the Someswari Temple, a languishing ancient Hindu shrine located barely a minute's walk away outside the Taravad compound. I was then met by a nephew of Parukutty who was a government revenue officer of some seniority in the district collector's office. He explained in

slow and halting English how difficult it was today to maintain a manor house of that size "in this day and age". And how and why everybody in the family was now living scattered elsewhere, mostly outside the state of Kerala prompting him to make the decision on behalf of the whole family to divide the large estate into plots for the heirs of the taravad if they ever chose to come back to the land. He also revealed that the taravad house they were now demolishing and which was at the foot of a gradually rising hill, was a rebuilt one, the original one having been removed to allow the railway line to pass through in the early 1900s.

I followed Parukutty into her new house, recently built on what was given to her as her share of the taravad land within the large compound. Over coffee, cakes and banana chips I broached my pet topic again with her. The joy and the enthusiasm of my earlier encounter with her was missing and it took some effort to keep her on the topic. She complained about the power-cuts and the disinterest of most family members to visit the taravad even once in a few years which had resulted in the decision to demolish the taravad. She vaguely remembered the taravad in all its splendor when she was a little child. Of lawyers, judges and soldiers in her family. Of temple elephants and palanquins, festivals and feasts; and especially of the family's contribution to the nearby Annapoorneshwari Temple as well as the austerities endured during the country's freedom struggle of 1947. She remembered as a child, learning the spinning of cotton on a charka from the elders as one of Mahatma Gandhi's efforts at self-sustenance. "Today, our clothes come from Dubai" she laughed.

On my request, and when the table was cleared, the old lady produced the little box with the coins. My excitement this time was irrepressible. I washed my hands before handling them and took pictures of each as best as I could. Using a small weighing scale I carried for the purpose, I weighed each piece of silver. I even measured the approximate diameter of each coin. Satisfied that at last I had enough data, I returned the coins to the old lady. She then began to narrate three or four instances when the nun from the mission hospital brought Christian patients with acute and chronic ailments furtively to the taravad to pray before the coins, placing their hands over the little box that contained them. The nun claimed the patients experienced quick and complete recovery from their afflictions. I listened to the familiar miracle stories related to Christian relics the world over, wondering what to make of it.

All went well up to that point in time. However, from that moment onwards, other relatives who had been curiously listening to our conversation began addressing Parukutty in Malayalam, after which the mood in the room turned altogether somber. Parukutty suddenly pleaded with me not to write or publish any article regarding the coins as the country was under martial law of some kind. She tried to explain to me that any controversy related to the coins in the newspapers may be met with unwarranted police inquiry, something her relatives feared. Though I couldn't see any crime committed or law broken by the mere possession of some family heirloom, I promised her I would publish nothing. As I was returning to Bombay, I also remember that year the newspapers in Kerala was agog with news of some human rights issue surrounding police brutality referred to as the "Rajan case". Perhaps there was this unreasonable and morbid fear of what the police might be capable of in the psyche of a Malayalee in those days.

I remember Parukutty's last words to me, "India is more secular, tolerant and careless today,



Ya'akov Meshorer

Paula-mole'. The communist government in Kerala don't care for relics. You have witnessed that my very family doesn't care for their own taravad. The bright lights of Dubai and Saudi is today's reality. Everyone wants to go there. New television sets, cars and electronic goods are the only kind of attraction. Thondachan's shrine lies dilapidated somewhere in the paddy fields. We have stopped contributing to the annual puja years ago as though it was some superstitious belief of the lower caste. Since the demolition

started hundreds of valuable antiques from the taravad have been sold for a song. The day is not far when these coins will also be forgotten when I am gone, mole'." (her speech was often interspersed with mole', an endearing local expression to mean "little one" or "daughter".)

Quite some years would pass before I traveled to Israel in the mid 1990s and was introduced to an expert in middle-eastern, especially Biblical numismatics. His name was Ya'akov Meshorer, an acclaimed scholar in the field. He examined the enlarged photographs of the four Rakta Velli pieces closely along with the weights and diameters I had recorded.

"Interesting! Remarkably well preserved!" Meshorer remarked. "The lack of adequate patina for a set of coins as ancient as these would have bothered me. But considering they remained uncirculated and did not change hands could be partly the reason for their mint condition. But these four coins fall in the category of what I call 'Jerusalem fakes'."

"Meaning they are not the real thing?" I inquired. To which Meshorer explained, "I do not wish to comment on whether these four coins belong to the thirty pieces mentioned in the Judas story as told in the New Testament. But my belief is that it was most likely a Shekel of Tyre that Jesus and Peter paid as the Temple Tax. Half Shekel each as mentioned in Matthew 17:27, and therefore it is possible that the same Shekels of Tyre were the coins that the priests of the temple paid to Judas as mentioned in Matthew 26:15. There were two kinds of Shekels from Tyre in use in Judea at that time. One that had the alphabets KP inscribed on them belonging to the era 18 BCE – 66 CE and one without. When Tyre discontinued minting these coins in 19 BCE, and Jewish authorities continued minting them in Jerusalem because they were the only coins acceptable for tax payments, perhaps due to the higher percentage of Tyrian silver in these coins. The artistic style deteriorated however with every new lot minted over the decades, but their overall look as a Tyrian Shekel and their weight in terms of silver content was enough to pass them off as Shekels of Tyre. These temple fakes are many, varying greatly in design accuracy as various casts and molds were used by the priests over time. Many perhaps remain to be discovered yet. Your four coins belong to this category. It may well have been thirty of these Jerusalem fakes that Judas received from the priests. The four coins you have here definitely belong to a category of the Shekels of Tyre that existed in the time of Jesus.

That information from a scholar of eminence was enough for me. I knew for certain the coins were true relics from St. Thomas. It was anyway inconceivable to me that a semi-literate old Hindu woman would make up such a fantastic story. The old Portuguese records in themselves were quite convincing to the extent that the Portuguese inquisitors had definite intelligence and information that the coins had survived till the 16th and 17th century, and were in the possession of the Kambian Valappil Nair family. The only question that now remained unanswered in my mind was how St. Thomas came into possession of the thirty Shekels of Tyre that was a matter of secret transaction between the temple priests and Judas.

As if by an act of destiny, translations of a text called the Gospel of Judas discovered in Egypt began emerging from 2001 and was even published in early 2006 by the National Geographic Society. The Gospel of Judas is a Gnostic gospel whose content consists of conversations between Judas Iscariot and Jesus. In contrast to the canonical gospels which paint Judas as a betrayer of Christ who delivered him up to the authorities for crucifixion in exchange for money, the Gospel of Judas portrays Judas's actions as done in obedience to instructions given by Christ. Even in the canonical gospels there is evidence to believe Jesus knew exactly who would betray him, when and how it will be done, etc.. Obviously there was more to the events of 2000 years ago than was recorded by Mark, Mathew, Luke and John. Of the hundreds of gospels written in the centuries following Christ, only four have been declared "acceptable" or Canonical. There is also a long list of "lost gospels" – which have been well known to have existed and written earlier than the canonical gospels, perhaps immediately after the crucifixion, but which disappeared or have been destroyed at various times in history on the whims of some monarchs, non-Christians or the Catholic Church itself. I am certain the truth will finally emerge on how these thirty pieces of silver came into Jesus' and St. Thomas's possession.

Today, I am nearing eighty years old and quite feeble myself. My last visit to India was in 2004, staying long enough to see the Taj Mahal and visit Rajasthan. I returned to Germany in 2005. It was another India all over again for me. Cars of every description plied the roads. The roads themselves were lined with malls, supermarkets and stores selling exclusive international brands. People looked wealthy and fashionable. Consumerism was certainly at a high. It was mid-October when I landed at Bangalore, this time having decided to take the road to reach Kerala. There was some excitement on the highway when news broke that some famous bandit had been killed by the police. I remember wondering what a strange country I was in. I had just left behind a city whose streets were lined with blue-chip corporates and malls with bowling alleys and fine-dine restaurants. In a matter of less than a couple of hours I was on a highway where a man who lived his life as a forest brigand and elephant poacher had just been killed.

My dear Parukutty amma was long dead and the compound in which the taravad stood was overgrown with weeds. Some new houses in the vicinity were perhaps owned by her relatives but it appeared pointless trying to communicate with them. My friend, the nun at the mission hospital, had also been transferred elsewhere. I had come alone and left Cherukunnu in a matter of hours without meeting anyone except some hospital staff who barely knew me. I felt free to now talk about the coins, perhaps even write about it. This is what I did when I

returned to Munich. Justin, a contact in India later wrote to me to tell me that the story was circulated among Indian Christians but most seemed unsure about its authenticity. Very few even felt the need to investigate anything more into the matter. Parukutty was right. Nobody quite cared. Instead, a few months later a relative of Parukutty called me on my mobile phone all the way through to Munich, in a rather foul mood wanting an explanation as to why I had broken my promise. I told him that it was time the world got to know about a very important relic lying in obscure hands. And that anyway the person to whom I had made the promise was long dead. Apart from that I had myself published the article only in Germany. I felt I had done my bit for God and man. The caller began to use abusive language. I listened to some of his offensive expletives and decided I had had enough of this exploit in my life. I am aging too and not in good health lately. I have delved into this story long enough. I have failed to understand the irrational fear of publicity some members of this family has. Apart from the fact that this event in the Bible, particularly that of the exchange of these silver pieces between Judas and the temple priests was the pivotal episode for the very start of Christianity, these relics also proves that the apostle St. Thomas had indeed visited India. The coins may never be revealed to anyone for another generation by this Hindu family. But I, once and for all desired to set the record straight and let the matter rest for good in my life. Thus, this is my story in all its necessary detail.

Paula Gruber

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Ritual Murder in Rural England: The Strange Case of Charles Walton -

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CVLT Nation

Mark Laskey June 6, 2016

A brutal murder is reported in a quiet West Midlands village. Local authorities are unable to come up with a suspect or motive, so Scotland Yard sends their best detective to help crack the case. It could be the plot line



to any number of classic English murder mysteries. However, the investigation into this particular homicide would soon take an unexpectedly strange turn. Hushed rumors of witchcraft, spectral black dogs and ritual sacrifice would surround the case as it became entangled

in the dark folklore and history of the region. Was this the work of a lone madman? Or was it something far more sinister?

On the evening of February 14, 1945, in the small Warwickshire hamlet of Lower Quinton, the mutilated body of Charles Walton was discovered in a field he had worked just below Meon Hill. A lifelong resident of the area, the 74-year old Walton was known to be a quiet man and something of a recluse. He shared a cottage with his niece, but otherwise kept to himself. Despite suffering from rheumatism, he was physically active and earned his living as a farm laborer. By all accounts, he was described as honest, hard-working and mild-mannered. Why would anyone want the old man dead?

Even more puzzling was the savage, and downright bizarre, nature of the crime.

Walton's throat had been cut three times with his slash hook, a sickle-like tool that he used for hedging. The wounds were so deep that they nearly severed his head. He had also been brutally beaten, leaving his skull split, three ribs broken and heavy bruising on his body. And as a gruesome final act, his pitchfork had been skewered through the lower part of his face. [1] This was done with such force that it left his corpse firmly pinned to the ground in what appeared to be a deliberate position, with the head forced back, almost as if to drain the body of blood. Some accounts further claim that a crude, cross-shaped symbol had been carved into his chest. [2]

He was later found to be criminally insane and lived out his remaining days at the Broadmoor Criminal Lunatic Asylum.

Although James Haywood was ruled to be a man who suffered from delusions, his belief in witches was in fact shared by many people in the community. Reporting on the trial at the time, one London newspaper would note, “there is [still] a general belief in witchcraft at Long Compton and in other villages of South Warwickshire, among a certain class of the agricultural population.” [43]

Years later, just prior to the Walton murder, these regional folk beliefs would once again enter the media spotlight when another seemingly occult-related killing was discovered in nearby Worcestershire.

On April 18, 1943, four boys were walking through the forest near Wychbury Hill when, to their horror, they discovered a skeleton staring at them from inside a tree hollow. They reported their grisly finding to their parents, who immediately alerted the authorities. Police determined that the remains were of a female and the cause of death was concluded to be “likely suffocation.” Judging by the decomposition, it was estimated that the murder had taken place eighteen months prior, and it was obvious that someone went through a lot of trouble to place the corpse in the tree. A severed hand from the body was also discovered buried in the ground nearby. [44]



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Dental records failed to reveal the identity of the woman, and there were no local missing persons who fit her description. Police were at a loss. With a considerable passage of time since the murder had taken place and the limited resources available during wartime Britain, the ‘Tree Riddle Murder’ case soon went cold. It was at this time that cryptic graffiti began appearing around the West Midlands – “Who Put Bella in the Witch Elm?” Detectives involved with the case believed that the chalked messages, carefully written in three-inch-deep capital letters, were all written by the same hand. Whether this was

the killer taunting police or someone who knew the victim is anyone’s guess. [45]

There are many theories regarding the true identity of “Bella” and the details surrounding the case. But given the region’s history, it came as no surprise when the rumors of black magic began to circulate. Margaret Murray, who would later be consulted during the Walton investigation, speculated that perhaps “Bella” had run afoul of a local witches’ coven and was ritually murdered. “The cult of tree worship is an ancient one and is linked with sacrifices,” Murray would explain to news reporters eager to make sense of the crime. She also believed that the buried hand may have had some ritual significance. [46]

Ultimately, it will never be known who put Bella in the Witch Elm, or why. The case was

officially closed in 2009 (and is unlikely to ever be reopened). Curiously, when the files were donated to the Worcestershire county archives, it was discovered that the woman's remains had gone missing. After an initial examination by James Webster, a forensic expert from the University of Birmingham, they simply disappeared from record in 1943. This has led some people to believe there may have been an official cover-up. [47] Whether or not there is any validity to these conspiracy claims, without the help of modern DNA testing both the woman's identity and any possible motive to explain the strange murder will never be known.

CONCLUSION

So, was Charles Walton "England's last witch-killing," as many have claimed? We will never know for sure. Like 'Witch Elm Bella', Walton's killer (or killers) and the motive behind the grisly murder would never come to light. Initially, there was suspicion placed on his employer, a farmer named Alfred Potter, who owned the land where the murder had taken place, but he was soon cleared. Further rounds of questioning also provided no new information – before slamming his door on the detectives, one elderly villager shouted: "He's been dead and buried a month now, what are you worrying about?" [48]

The Walton case would be Chief Inspector Robert Fabian's single unsolved murder throughout his long career with Scotland Yard. "Maybe somebody in that tranquil village off the main road knows who killed Charles Walton," lamented Fabian. "Maybe one day somebody will talk? Not to me, a stranger from London, perhaps – but I happen to know that in the offices of Warwickshire Constabulary the case is not yet closed." [49] No one ever has. It's a mystery that still lingers on after seventy years, and to this day the case continues to be the oldest unsolved case on record with the Warwickshire police.

In one final mystery, Charles Walton's corpse would also eventually go missing. It's known that he had been buried in St. Swithin's Cemetery, in the churchyard directly across the road from his cottage and a short walk from the field where his mangled body was found. But there is no longer a gravestone that bares his name and no one can seem to remember exactly where the plot was located. It is assumed that the villagers of Lower Quinton had become tired of being associated with the infamous "occult murder" and removed the marker to discourage bothersome legend-trippers from disrupting the peace of the cemetery grounds. They could also have been lost during some churchyard renovations that happened fifty years after his death. Or else his remains may have been removed altogether and transferred to some unknown location. [50]

With no surviving family, Charles Walton's memory will simply live on as another dark chapter in the annals of Warwickshire legend and folklore, and whoever spilled his blood on that fateful February day will remain forever lost to the shadows of history.

Mark Laskey

<http://illuminating-shadows.blogspot.com>

FOOTNOTES

1. The Case That Foiled Fabian: Murder and Witchcraft in Rural England, Simon Read; pg. 17
2. The Devil's Dominion: The Complete Story of Hell and Satanism in the Modern World, Anthony Masters; pg. 159
3. The Meaning of Witchcraft, Gerald Gardner; pg. 235
4. The Case That Foiled Fabian: Murder and Witchcraft in Rural England, Simon Read; pg. 83
5. The Pitchfork Murder: Is This England's Creepiest Unsolved Crime?, Neil Mitchell; Real Crime Daily, August 5, 2015
6. The Case That Foiled Fabian: Murder and Witchcraft in Rural England, Simon Read; pg. 159
7. The Meaning of Witchcraft, Gerald Gardner; pg. 234
8. Creatures in the Mist: Little People, Wild Men and Spirit Beings Around the World, Gary Varner; pg. 138
9. The Case That Foiled Fabian: Murder and Witchcraft in Rural England, Simon Read; pg. 160
10. *ibid*; pg. 160
11. *ibid*; pg. 50
12. Haunted Places of Warwickshire, Rupert Matthews; pg. 87-88
13. The Pitchfork Murder: Is This England's Creepiest Unsolved Crime?, Neil Mitchell; Real Crime Daily, August 5, 2015
14. Magickal, Mystical Creatures: Invite Their Powers Into Your Life; D. J. Conway; pg 147
15. The Case That Foiled Fabian: Murder and Witchcraft in Rural England, Simon Read; pg. 11
16. The Witches of Long Compton, Michael Howard; pg. 3
17. The Case That Foiled Fabian: Murder and Witchcraft in Rural England, Simon Read; pg. 50
18. *ibid*; pg. 51
19. 10 Legends of Ancient Megaliths and Stones From The British Isles, Debra Kelly; Listverse, March 30, 2016
20. The Witches of Long Compton, Michael Howard; pg. 1
21. *ibid*; pg. 2
22. The Case That Foiled Fabian: Murder and Witchcraft in Rural England, Simon Read; pg. 51
23. Skeleton of a High Status Spiritual Woman Unearthed Near Rollright Stones in England, Mark Miller; Ancient Origins blog, August 9, 2015
24. Explore Phantom Black Dogs, Bob Trubshaw
25. The Case That Foiled Fabian: Murder and Witchcraft in Rural England, Simon Read; pg. 127
26. *ibid*; pg. 128
27. *ibid*; pg. 127
28. *ibid*; pg. 133
29. *ibid*; pg. 160
20. Human Sacrifice in Iron Age Britain, Miranda Aldhouse Green; British Archaeology, Issue 38, October 1998

31. *ibid*
32. *The Celts: Bronze Age to New Age*, John Haywood; pg. 43
33. *Mysterious Celtic Mythology in American Folklore*, Bob Curran; pg. 200
34. *The Encyclopedia of Celtic Mythology and Folklore*, Patricia Monaghan; pg. 256
35. *The Anglo-Saxon Home: A History of the Domestic Institutions and Customs of England*, John Thrupp; pg. 271
36. *The Meaning of Witchcraft*, Gerald Gardner; pg. 234
37. *Shakespeare's Greenwood: The Customs of the Country*, George Morley; pg. 69
38. *Haunted Places of Warwickshire*, Rupert Matthews; pg. 87
39. *The Case That Foiled Fabian: Murder and Witchcraft in Rural England*, Simon Read; pg. 25-26
40. *The Witches of Long Compton*, Michael Howard; pg. 4
41. *The Devil's Dominion: The Complete Story of Hell and Satanism in the Modern World*, Anthony Masters; pg. 160
42. *The Witches of Long Compton*, Michael Howard; pg. 4
43. *A Curious Murder Trial*; *The Times*, January 8, 1876
44. *The Case That Foiled Fabian: Murder and Witchcraft in Rural England*, Simon Read; pg. 135-36
45. *Bella in the Wych Elm: A Midlands Murder Mystery*, Brian Haughton; pg. 2
46. *The Case That Foiled Fabian: Murder and Witchcraft in Rural England*, Simon Read; pg. 141
47. *Who Put Bella Down the Wych Elm?*; *Strange Remains* blog, April 24, 2014
48. *The Case That Foiled Fabian: Murder and Witchcraft in Rural England*, Simon Read; pg. 128
49. *Black Dogs on Meon Hill*, Devin McKinney; *The Face At The Window*, February 14, 2006
50. *The English: The Countryside and It's People*, Michael Watkins; pg. 241

Mark Laskey

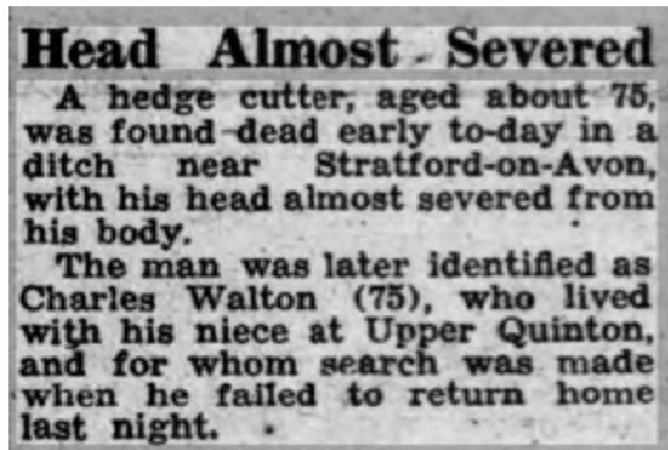
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With no immediate leads, it soon became apparent to the local authorities that outside assistance would be needed. Detective Chief Inspector Robert Fabian, the foremost police detective of his day, along with his partner Albert Webb, was soon dispatched by Scotland Yard and tasked with bringing Walton's killer – or killers – to justice.

THE OCCULT CONNECTION

Lower Quinton is a small rural village with a population of a few hundred. In reality, it is no more than a village green surrounded by some old thatched-roofed cottages, a church, a local pub and some outlying farms. Surely someone would know something about the murder.



Gloucester_Citizen_15_February_1945_thumb

To the surprise of the Chief Inspector, not a single person came forward with any information. He and his partner personally interviewed nearly five hundred residents from the Lower Quinton area during their investigation, only to be left with more questions than answers. "There were lowered eyes, reluctance to speak except for talk of bad crops – a heifer that died in a ditch," Fabian noted. "But what had that to do with Charles Walton? Nobody would say." [3] Even more baffling, no one seemed to fear for their safety. An elderly

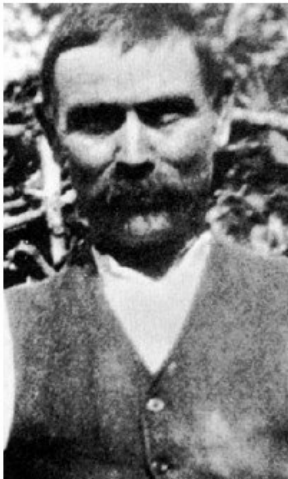
member of this small community had been violently butchered in broad daylight, and there was little concern of a madman on the loose.

Whether frightened, suspicious of outsiders or bound by some oath of secrecy, Fabian was convinced that the residents of Lower Quinton were hiding something. [4] Left frustrated by his interviews and with few clues that could help bring light to the case, he began to look into both the personal life of Charles Walton and the history of this peculiar region.

To better acquaint him with "the ways" known to the people of rural Warwickshire, Fabian was given a book entitled *Folklore, Old Customs and Superstitions in Shakespeare Land*, authored by a local clergyman named J. Harvey Bloom in 1929. [5] The book chronicles various folk stories and superstitions unique to the region, many of which seem to tap into a broader sense of darkness that permeates the area. For centuries, the county was known to be a hotbed of witchcraft and paranormal activity, and, to some degree, continued to be steeped in these beliefs at the time of the Walton murder.

Given the unusual, almost ritualistic, nature of the killing, Fabian began to consider the possibility that witchcraft had some role to play. He also openly wondered if there might be a broader conspiracy at work in the village. The theory seemed far-fetched at first, but there were certain details that would continue to point the case in this direction – including the background of Charles Walton himself. From what little information locals offered up, a curious assessment of his character started to emerge. Most described him as an eccentric

and solitary old man. However, there were some who spoke of him in a fearful way and claimed that he possessed “certain powers.”



Fabian_and_Walton

It was said that the old man was gifted with a unique ability to communicate with animals. As a young man, Walton was alleged to have been an accomplished “horse whisperer” – someone able to control horses through hand or eye motions. He could also speak with birds. According to one witness account, “Walton had been seen on many occasions imitating the songs of the nightingale and chirping to other species of bird. He openly professed to be conversant in the Aeolian language of his feathered friends, for they seemed to obey his requests to refrain from eating the seeds sown in the fields of his little plot.” [6]

There was also talk of Walton being a clairvoyant and seer of spirits. Interestingly, a childhood example of this “second sight” is documented in Bloom’s book of local folklore. He wrote of “a plough lad named Charles Walton [who] met a black dog on his way home nine times in successive evenings. On the ninth encounter a headless lady rustled past him in a silk dress, and on the next day he heard of his sister’s death.” [7] This paranormal encounter “stained Walton’s soul” according to his superstitious-minded neighbors, imbuing the already strangely gifted child with even darker powers such as “the evil eye” – the ability to place a curse through hypnotic gaze. Some even believed he was a witch. If true, this might explain the toads.

During a search of the Walton residence following the murder, it was discovered that the back garden was overrun with large Natterjack toads. It was rumored that the old man had been breeding the creatures for nefarious purposes. The Natterjack, or walking toad, figures prominently in the annals of British witchcraft. During the sixteenth century, they were even collected and burned as “familiars of witches” and “emissaries of the Evil One.” [8]

Among a witch’s spell-casting arsenal was the practice of “blasting” – the power “to interfere with or destroy the fertility of man, beast and crop” – which, in some cases, saw the use of Natterjack toads. When the infamous Scottish witch Isobel Gowdie went on trial in 1662, she confessed to, among other crimes, fastening small plows to her toads and setting them loose in the local fields, leaving the soil sterile and unable to produce crops. [9]

Despite decent weather, the region’s crop season had in fact been exceptionally bad the year prior to the Walton murder. People even complained that the beer brewed



witch's familiar

from that wheat harvest was bitter and undrinkable. Lower Quinton was hit especially hard. Some alluded to the possibility that Charles Walton may have blighted the crops through witchcraft. One of Walton's former employers, a farmer from nearby Long Compton, may have even witnessed the blasting ritual firsthand. "Old Charlie," he claimed, "used to catch a toad and tie a toy plough to its legs and have it run along towing the thing across a field." [10]

Behind the wall of silence encountered by the Chief Inspector, were there area residents who believed that Charles Walton had hexed the land and sickened livestock with his bewitched toads and powers of the evil eye? Could he have been the victim of some brutal form of folk justice carried over from the area's past witch-hunting traditions? According to the official case files, there was no direct occult connection. However, off the record, Fabian believed this to be a real possibility.

A LAND OF DARK ENCHANTMENT

The Cotswolds region, and the county of Warwickshire in particular, has been steeped in a strong belief of the supernatural since its earliest days of settlement. The brooding rural landscape has always provided fertile ground for tales involving witches, phantom coaches, headless horsemen, a ghostly woman in white, mysterious black dogs, faeries and various demonic entities. It's also a region where the outdated folk beliefs and traditions long since discarded elsewhere in Britain have persisted.

In his memoirs, Robert Fabian incorporates local legend into his description of the Walton crime scene. "On the hilltops around Lower Quinton," he wrote, "are circles of stones where witches are reputed to hold Sabbaths, and it was under the shadow of Meon Hill, not far from the stone circle of whispering knights, that on Valentine's Day of 1945 a rheumatic old man was found murdered." [11]

Meon Hill, a circular mound at the edge of the Cotswold ridge, is located in an area dotted with Neolithic and Bronze Age burial mounds and the remnants of various Iron Age and Roman encampments. From the time of these ancient inhabitants, and throughout the ages since, the entire area has been associated with dark, supernatural forces – an evil place, where even the birds won't sing. Some even say it is a gateway to Hell. [12]

The Celts believed the hill was the resting place of Arawn, lord of the underworld. [13] Accompanied by a pack of spectral hounds, Arawn would embark on nightly hunts to gather the souls of the departed. Night travel could be a dangerous venture in Old Britain, as a hapless encounter with Arawn's nocturnal hunting party was considered a death-omen. [14]

In later times, the Devil would take up residence at Meon Hill, using it as his earthly base to

launch attacks against the newly established Christian population. Enraged by the construction of nearby Evesham Abbey in the eighth-century, local legend describes how the Devil kicked a massive boulder down the hill in an attempt to destroy it. However, as the story goes, the village faithful managed to divert its course through the power of prayer. The boulder missed the Abbey and came to rest on Cleeve Hill, near Cheltenham, where the villagers carved it into a giant stone cross to ward off further attacks. [15]

Another devilish folktale took place in a nearby field called The Close, which stands on top of an ancient earthwork site of unknown origin. Drawing a circle on the ground and reciting the Lord's Prayer backwards, a young man from Long Compton signed a pact with the Devil. In return for his soul, the man was given twelve imps as his own personal servants. He would later cause a scandal at Banbury Fair when he summoned a demonic spirit that appeared in the shape of a black rooster. [16]

The "stone circle of whispering knights" mentioned in Fabian's memoirs refers to a section of the ancient megalith site known as The Rollright Stones, located a few miles from Meon Hill, which dates back as early as 2,500 BCE. Three separate elements make up the site – The King's Men, a circle of seventy-seven large stones that was built for ceremonial purposes; The King Stone, a single monolith that stands to the north of The King's Men; and The Whispering Knights, which lie to the east, are five upright stones that lay inwards towards each other, as if they were whispering behind the king's back. [17]



RIVSEB8IBgRYQ0NDFRsHSVFHTwNJVEZEVQ==

According to legend, The Rollright Stones are the cursed remains of a Viking king and his army. While marching through the Cotswolds, the king, intent on conquering all of England, had run afoul of a local witch named Mother Shipton. The angered witch – who, in some versions of the story, is portrayed as a representation of Sovereignty, the goddess protector of the land – transformed the invading army into stones and herself into a nearby elder tree that eternally guards over them. [18] The curse is briefly lifted on certain nights of the

year when, at the stroke of midnight, the stones come to life. Some of the king's men leave their place on the hill to drink at a nearby spring, while others join hands and dance. In some versions, the faerie folk who dwell in caves underneath the stone circle come out to join in the late night festivities. [19]

The Rollright Stones are believed to be charged with supernatural energy, and a special significance is placed on the King's Stone. Regarded as a potent phallic symbol, imbued with the power of fertility, tradition has it that if a local woman is unable to conceive after marriage, she visits the site on a full-moon night and rubs her naked breasts against the King's Stone – always resulting in a healthy baby nine months later. [20]

The ancient stone circle has also traditionally provided a place of gathering for witches. In the sixteenth-century, a witch-hunting commission was assembled in Oxford to investigate reports of coven activities at the site. A century later, "a witche" from Little Rollright was charged with attempted murder through black magic means. At her trial, she was accused of having attended sabbats at the Rollright Stones and Boar Hill (outside of Oxford), and sentenced to hang. [21] It is even claimed that as a child, Charles Walton would "steal out to the mysterious Rollright Stones nearby and watch witch rituals." [22]

Recently, in August 2015, the 1,400 year-old skeletal remains of a Saxon woman were unearthed near the stone circle. She was found buried with a large amber bead, an amethyst set in silver, copper pins, a spinning wheel, a decorated antler and a patera – a ladle-like ritual instrument used to make offerings to the gods. Based on these items, experts believe her to be a woman of high spiritual status, or else a witch – Mother Shipton?. [23]

BLACK DOG CURSE

Arawn's night hunts may have faded with Britain's pagan past, and it would seem that the Devil has kept a much lower profile in recent years, but an unspoken dark presence still surrounds Meon Hill. Likewise, ritual activity continues at the nearby Rollright Stones. Gatherings of cloaked figures, mutilated animal remains and evidence of nightly bonfires have all been reported at the site. However, as far as lingering local legends go, it's the black dogs that residents fear most.

A Strange
and terrible Wonder wrought
very late in the parish Church
of Rongey a Town of no great di-
stance from the city of Norwich, named
by the fourth of this August, in the year of
our Lord 1577. In a great tempest of ter-
rible rains, lightning, and thunder, the
like whet of hath been felt
some time.
With the appearance of an horrible thing,
and thing, terrible, perceived of the
people then and there
assembled.
Written into a plain method ac-
cording to the written copy.
by Abraham Fleming.



A_ Strange_ and_ terrible

English folklore is full of tales involving phantom black dogs. Nearly every county has its own variant. Whether sighted along a lonely stretch of highway, the outlying hills surrounding a village or lurking the local cemetery grounds, there are various theories as to what these spectral canines represent. Some say they are witches' familiars or demonic entities, possibly a manifestation of the Devil himself. Others identify them as the ghosts of murdered or executed individuals who haunt the area of their demise. Regardless of paranormal back story, popular superstition casts them as cursed entities – the black harbingers of death and misfortune. [24]

Black dogs would feature prominently in the Walton murder case. As already mentioned, a young Charles Walton was haunted by a black dog in the days leading up to his sister's death. A lifetime later, during the investigation into his murder, another mysterious black dog encounter would take place.

While he was in Lower Quinton, Chief Inspector Robert Fabian's investigation would bring him through St. Swithin's Cemetery and into the fields surrounding Meon Hill. On a nearby stone wall, he noticed a peculiar black dog following his movements. A moment later it was gone. When he left the field, a boy was walking nearby. Fabian asked him if he was looking for his dog. The boy seemed confused, so he specified ("the black dog..."). On hearing this, the boy turned pale and fled in a panic. Word soon spread throughout the village that the Chief Inspector had seen "The Ghost." [25]

A series of strange incidents would happen in the days following this phantom black dog encounter.

The next morning began with the discovery that another cow had dropped dead in one of the grazing fields around Meon Hill. Never a good way to start a day. Later that day, as Fabian attempted to conduct more interviews, he noted that the entire atmosphere of Lower Quinton had changed. In his memoirs he writes, “when we walked into the village pub that evening silence fell like a physical blow. Cottage doors shut in our faces, and even the most innocent witnesses seemed unable to meet our eyes. Some became ill after we spoke to them.” [26]

A few days later, a black dog was found dead and hanging from a tree near the spot where Charles Walton’s body had been discovered weeks earlier. This was likely a sick prank played on Fabian by some locals following the news of his sighting. However, it may have been a warning. It was at this point in the investigation, Fabian would later write, “[that we] realized for certain that we were up against witchcraft.” [27]

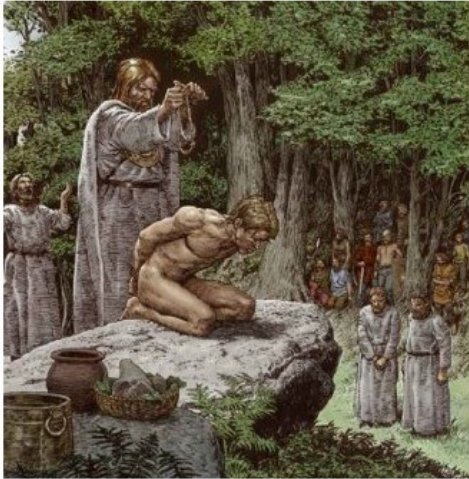
A SOIL THAT THIRSTS FOR BLOOD

One theory – in fact, one believed by many – was that Charles Walton’s murder was some form of ritual sacrifice – “the ghastly climax of a pagan rite,” the Chief Inspector would later declare. [28] Margaret Murray, a professor from University College in London who had written extensively on the history of European witchcraft, took a great interest in the Walton case. She claimed that the murder was likely a ritual act, performed for the purpose of replenishing the soil with the old man’s blood. “The belief is,” according to Murray, “that if life is taken out of the ground [...] it must be replaced by a blood sacrifice.” [29]

Not much is known about “the old ways” as they were practiced during Iron Age Britain. What little information there is has been pieced together from the accounts of Roman historians and various archaeological discoveries – both of which point to the importance of ritual sacrifice within the ancient Celtic magico-religious system.

Sacrifice was the means by which the balance of nature was maintained, with offerings made to the governing divine forces in exchange for their blessings. Most consisted of animals, food, wine, incense, weapons or jewelery. However, the ritual murder of humans was not unusual. It was an extra-ordinary form of sacrifice made during particularly critical times; to avert a famine or epidemic, provide victory before battle, promote fertility or guarantee a successful harvest. [30]

Victims would be selected from across a wide spectrum of candidates that included criminals, kings, menopausal women, adolescents, rival clan chiefs and social outcasts (those with physical deformities, sexual ambiguities or witches). [31] Witches in particular are thought to have been a sacrificial favorite. As it was widely believed that they possessed the power to disrupt or manipulate the natural order, a witch provided the ideal scapegoat offering to appease the gods and restore essential balance.



1008_33_165-cathbad-the-druid

Celtic Druids are most infamously known for burning people in large wicker effigies. But they also strangled, drowned, poisoned, stoned, beheaded, dismembered and buried them alive. The sacrificial act could vary, with different means of dispatchment used for different ceremonial purposes – and sometimes the gods called for a bloodbath. One particularly gruesome Druidic ritual shares certain similarities with the Walton murder. Known as “the threefold death,” multiple killing methods (such as strangulation, head injuries and throat-cutting) would be used in an act of ritual overkill to either appease multiple gods or ensure maximum bloodshed. [32]

As an agriculturally-based society, blood was particularly important to the Celts when it came to maintaining a healthy crop cycle. During the winter months, when the land had frosted over and the sun hung low in the sky, it was believed that the world had reached the end of its life-cycle. In order to “reawaken the earth” and usher in a new season of rebirth and revitalization, the soil needed to be symbolically replenished with life-giving blood. [33]

If the Walton murder was indeed some crude form of human sacrifice, the date when it took place may hold some significance. He was killed on February 14th. Going by the old (pre-Gregorian) calendar, which was twelve days behind, this date would correspond with the Celtic Midwinter festival of Imbolc. As a celebration of new life, Imbolc rituals centered around ensuring a successful growing season and the health and fertility of local livestock. [34] If rumors are to be believed, Walton was to blame for the failure of the previous year’s harvest and the unexplained death of a cow. To break the hex he was believed to have placed over the community and restore a sense of natural order, it may be no coincidence that his blood was spilled on this day.



The use of a pitchfork may further reinforce the ‘ritual murder theory,’ and is also not without precedent in the region. Following the Anglo-Saxon settlement of the area in the fifth-century, new traditions of witch-hunting would take root. Differing from later medieval Christian beliefs, the Anglo-Saxon concept of witchcraft centered on specific acts of (perceived) sorcery, rather than some broader diabolical conspiracy. The practice itself was not considered a crime; however, if it were used for criminal purposes, punishment could be harsh. One crude investigative method used was called *stacung* (“sticking” or “staking”), where the

bodies of the accused would be pierced with iron spikes, pins or large thorns. If the wounds festered and turned black, it was considered proof that they were practitioners of black magic. [35]

Similar to the original stacung practice is a more recent (beginning in the 1500's) Cotswold hill-country belief that a witch's powers could be drained through "blooding" – that is, to draw blood by a non-lethal stab wound ("be it but a pin's prick"). William Shakespeare, the area's most famous native son, even made reference to the practice in his play *Henry VI, Part I* ("Blood will I draw on thee, thou art a witch."). [36] A number of blood-letting assaults against suspected witches would take place in the Warwickshire village of Tysoe in the later nineteenth-century. In one such attack, an elderly woman was seized by area residents, who used a corking pin to puncture her hand in an attempt "to nullify the effects of the evil eye she had cast upon them." [37]

KILL THE WITCH

As with most murder mysteries, the facts surrounding the Charles Walton case would become murky and sensationalized over time – admittedly, even some of the "evidence" presented in this article is based on unsubstantiated rumor or secondary sources. One controversial detail is the claim made that he was found with a cross symbol carved into his chest.

If true, this would be strong support for the claim that it was a witch-killing. For centuries, Christian folk superstition has held to the belief that 'the sign of the cross' could be used as divine protection against malevolent forces or spell-casting, particularly in defending against "the evil eye." During Warwickshire's witch-hunting past, a more overtly religious form of "blooding" involved carving a cross directly onto the body of a witch in order to nullify their diabolical powers (or else ensure that a dead witch could not return from the grave). [38]

The problem is that none of the official police reports, autopsy documents or contemporary newspaper accounts mention a cross being carved on Walton's body. [39] So how did this detail enter into the popular mythos surrounding the case? It may have started as local rumor. But more likely it is based on a previous area murder that shares eerily similar characteristics to, and has since become intertwined with, the killing of Charles Walton.

Seventy-five years prior, in the neighboring village of Long Compton, an elderly woman named Anne Tennant (some accounts name her as Ann Turner) was attacked and killed with a pitchfork by a mentally unstable farmhand named James Haywood. According to court records, Haywood believed Tennant was a one of sixteen witches who lived in the village, that she possessed the power of the Evil Eye, and that she had "bewitched the cattle and land of local farmers." More directly personal, he also blamed her spell-casting for a death in his family and severe cramping that prevented him from working in the fields. [40]

Haywood defended his actions to the court, explaining how he felt it to be his duty to protect the community from Tennant's black magic. "It's she who brings the floods and drought," he argued. "Her spells withered the crops in the field. Her curse drove my father to an early grave!" The excited man detailed how he "pinned her to the ground with a pitchfork before slashing her chest with a billhook in the form of a cross." [41]

To prove the righteousness of his cause, he insisted that the judge dig up the old woman's corpse and "weigh it against a Church bible" in order to confirm that she was indeed "a proper witch." [42] The judge declined this request and instead charged Haywood with manslaughter.

Calgary stabbing: Students gather on campus to mourn 5 victims

2014/04/16

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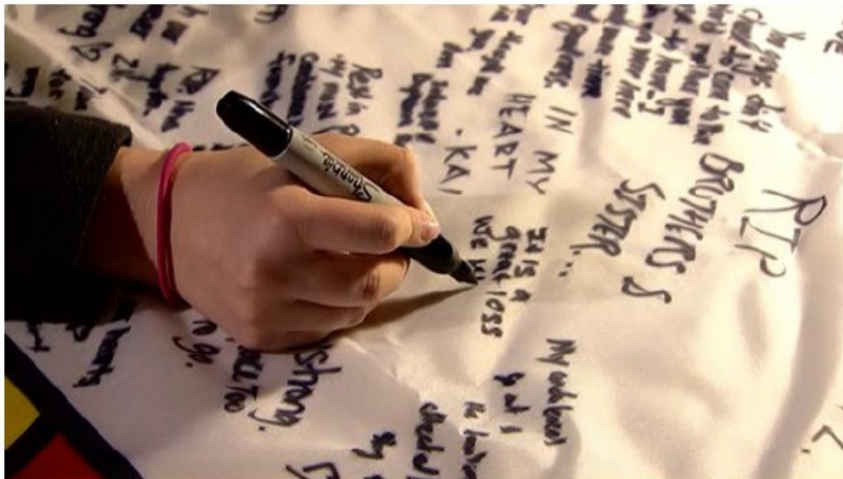
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Calgary stabbing: Students gather at University of Calgary to mourn victims

Victims of house party stabbing were students of University of Calgary and Alberta College of Art and

Design

CBC News Posted: Apr 15, 2014 5:31 PM MT Last Updated: Apr 16, 2014 6:36 AM MT



Students signed a flag of condolences at a University of Calgary vigil Tuesday afternoon. (CBC)

Hundreds of students gathered at the University of Calgary to mourn five young people stabbed to death.

Among those at the emotional community gathering in MacEwan Hall Tuesday afternoon were students, staff and Calgary Mayor Naheed Nenshi.

"We're going to make it through this. We're strong. We're strong because we have each other," Nenshi said.

Students signed a flag of condolence and speakers urged them to take care of themselves and make use of the resources available, such as the campus Wellness Centre.

"You might feel alone right now, but look at this room.



Let's come together as a community," said student president Raphael Jacob.

University president Elizabeth Cannon told the gathering that she has received messages of support from across the country.

"I think the key message today is to make sure that you take care of yourself, that you reach out for support, that you take care of those around, because this is a test of our community."



Exams will go ahead next week, but Cannon says the university will consider deferring in some cases.

"Absolutely we will entertain deferred exams for those who need it and we'll look at that in a case-by-case basis, but all the information is up on our website to ensure that those who feel they need to defer an exam are given the support that they need to help make that happen."



Jordan Fabro attended the memorial because he was close friends with four of the five victims.

"My friend group is going through a bit of a tough time right now. I knew I had to come to this today. Some of my friends that are going



through this are out of town, in the country, going through finals, going to school right now. I am one of the few that could make it to this memorial for them."

Matthew de Grood, who attended the university, has been charged with five counts of first-degree murder. Four men and a woman died following the early-morning stabbings in the city's Brentwood neighbourhood, just north of the campus.

Hundreds gathered for a vigil in the University of Calgary's MacEwan Hall following the stabbing deaths of five young people in a rented home near the campus. (Devin Heroux/CBC)

According to neighbours, people at a house had been celebrating the last day of university classes with a fire in the backyard.

Bermuda Shorts Day (BSD) festivities to mark the end of the University of Calgary's winter semester have been a campus tradition since 1960.

Susan Anderson, editor of the student newspaper the Gauntlet, says there is usually a lot of drinking on BSD, but the day has always been a positive part of university life.

"Everyone's friends, right. You just invite anyone to your party, you know, it's a strong bonding day for the school ... but now it's been very, very tragically marked," she said.

Josh Hunter and Zackariah Rathwell have been identified as two of the victims. Hunter was a business student at the University of Calgary. Rathwell was a first-year student at ACAD, a Calgary arts college.

Also killed were Kaitlin Perras, Jordan Segura, and Lawrence Hong.

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Naked man jumps into a zoo's LION enclosure in a 'suicide bid'

17:29 EST, 21 May 2016 |

dailymail.co.uk

Daily Mail

MailOnline US - news, sport, celebrity, science and health stories

'Suicide by LION': Man strips naked and jumps into a Chilean zoo's enclosure in a bid to feed himself to a big cat - and only survives in a grave condition after two beasts mauling him were SHOT DEAD

▪ The 20-year-old man was left gravely

injured in the Santiago Zoo incident

- Witnesses were horrified as keepers killed two lions during the attack
- They also reported that the man made religious proclamations at the time
- A suicide note was found in the man's clothing. He is recovering in hospital
- **WARNING GRAPHIC CONTENT**

By Jessica Ware and Imogen Calderwood For Mailonline

A man who stripped naked and entered a lion enclosure in a Chilean zoo has survived the incident, but the lions were killed.

Authorities in Santiago confirmed that the two African lions were put down as they severely mauled the 20-year-old man who had broken into their cage early on Saturday.

The man, who has been named by local media as Franco Luis Ferrada Roman, was taken to a nearby hospital for treatment and was said to be in grave condition.

Scroll down for video



A 20-year-old man took off his clothes and broke into a lion enclosure at Santiago zoo Saturday, where he was mauled by lions

Zoo keepers killed two lions to save the man, who was gravely injured in the incident. A suicide note was reported to have been found in his clothing

The young man broke into the enclosure, took off his clothes and jumped into the middle, horrifying other visitors who witnessed the attack.

Once inside, the lions reportedly immediately pounced on him and began to 'play' with him.

At this point, zookeepers intervened in the attack and shot the two lions in order to save his



life.

The director of the zoo, Alejandra Montalva, said: 'We believe that this person entered as a visitor and paid for his ticket.

She told local media the park was crowded with visitors at the time of the incident.

'Later he trespassed into an area where the public are not

normally allowed and we understand that he forced the roof of the lion's enclosure.

'It was from there that he jumped, took off his clothes and started to attract the lions.'

The zoo director said she was 'deeply affected' by the deaths of the two lions, a male and a female.

'The zoo has an established protocol because people's lives are very important to us,' said Montalva.

She added that there were no fast-acting tranquilizers available to stop the lions from mauling the man.



The attack occurred in full view of visitors, who could only watch in horror as the man was mauled and the lions - one male, one female - were killed

One witness, Cynthia Vasquez, told Chilean radio station Bio Bio that the security personnel at the zoo were slow to react and that the animals did not attack the

man as soon as he entered the enclosure.

'He entered the enclosure from above and the lions started to play with him, and then after they attacked him,' she said.

She also said the man was 'shouting things about Jesus'.

She criticised the actions of the security personal, saying 'first they threw water, evacuated

the people and only later did they fire shots'.

A father who was at the park with his young son, told news channel Chilevision: 'Everyone started screaming when they saw him.'

Another witness added: 'There were a lot of children there, and parents covered their eyes while it was going on.'

They continued: 'He was screaming religious things.'

According to the news channel, the suicide note that was found inside his clothes made allusions to the apocalypse as being a reason for his attempt to take his life.

Metropolitan Park director Mauricio Fabry confirmed that a note - which appeared to be a suicide note - was found in his clothing.

By Saturday evening, Mr Ferrada Roman was said to no longer be in a life-threatening condition, according to Chilean media.

Dr Sebastian Ugarde of Indisa Clinic said that Mr Ferrada Roman's heart almost stopped.

He added: 'He suffered several injuries and trauma to the head and the pelvic area.'

'We have high hopes that will recover and that will be fine.'



The entrances to the lion enclosures were closed off after the attack

For confidential support call the Samaritans on 116123 or visit a local Samaritans branch, see www.samaritans.org for details.

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Eat Dinner At A Table Suspended 150 Feet In The Air

laist.com

Eat Dinner At A Table Suspended 150 Feet In The Air

by Juliet Bennett Rylah in Food on Jun 1, 2016 2:01 pm



london-dinner.JPG

Dinner in the Sky in London (Photo via Dinner in the Sky)

Looking to conquer your fear of heights? Perhaps a new pop-up dinner situation several stories above ground will excite you.

Dinner in the Sky takes its guests to dizzying heights by suspending a dining table from a crane, then serving up a four-course meal 150 feet above the ground below, according to Timeout Los Angeles. And we'd just gotten used to the idea of that glass-bottomed slide attached to the 69th and 70th floors of the US Bank Tower!

Dinner in the Sky comes from The Fun group, known for creating installations at amusement parks. The first meal took place in Belgium in 2006, and they've since held dinners in 45 countries, apparently without incident. L.A.'s pop-up will take place at the LA Center Studios in downtown Los Angeles.

Here's how it works: each seating accommodates 22 guests, who are all strapped into bucket seats with a safety harness. Waitstaff are also connected to harnesses. You begin on the ground and slowly rise up in the air.

As you can see from the video below, the table is not enclosed. The area beneath the mobile restaurant is cleared of all foot and car traffic to ensure you don't accidentally drop your steak knife on some unsuspecting passerby. They will not operate during thunderstorms or when it's particularly windy. In theory, it's not much scarier than your average rollercoaster. However, there are no bathrooms.

This vertigo-inducing experience will cost you at least \$399. You can start making reservations on June 3, the first dinner will be held on July 1, and the experience will run throughout July.

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Club owner's elaborate entrance to a party IN A TANK goes wrong

14:38, 9 Jun 2016 Updated 14:39, 9 Jun 2016 By Kirstie McCrum

mirror.co.uk

Businessman in Soviet TANK crashes into his own nightclub entrance in bizarre footage



One club owner brought the house down, literally, when he visited his venue in a Soviet TANK - and accidentally crashed it into the entrance.

The man, identified only as Rafal, was visiting his venue, Club Mono, with a friend in a 2S1 Gvozdika 122-mm self-propelled howitzer tank, according to reports.

The wealthy 38-year-old was inside the vehicle when this bizarre footage was taken showing the massive artillery machine driving through a small fire.

It eventually crashes into the building's entrance in Szubin, Poland, as a nervous man can be heard shouting: "F***, stop!" in Polish.

They were rehearsing their entrance for an event called Poland's Day of Freedom and Citizens' Rights, which is when the first free elections took place in the country.

Rafal, who was in the vehicle at the time, said: "Something is probably broken. Maybe the gearbox? I know nothing about these things, but the driver could not do anything."



Tank crashes into nightclub

The incident was intended to be a rehearsal for a Polish celebration

Firefighters came and pulled the howitzer out after removing metal beams at the building's entrance.

Rescue worker Pawel Przybylski said it made a difference from the regular callouts adding: "I have never experienced such an incident in my whole career."

The tank finally finishes its journey in the entrance of the club

Police also came to investigate and confirmed that the driver was sober and that the accident was caused by a technical failure.

Officer Justyna Andrzejewska said: "When the vehicle moved to the fenced area, most likely there was a failure of the gearbox and the howitzer crashed directly into the front door of the building."



Tank crashes into nightclub

Nobody was injured and little damage was caused by the accident, but Rafal was so shaken that he decided to cancel the party.



Tank crashes into nightclub

The driver accidentally brings the tank to a halt in the foyer of the club

The club owner said: "The firemen said that the building was not that badly affected. All I have to replace is the door and a wall.

"But it was all so stressful that by about 8pm I decided to cancel the party."

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Tasmanian devil returns to San Diego Zoo after pacemaker surgery

June 2, 2016

yahoo.com

<https://www.yahoo.com/news/tasmanian-devil-returns-san-diego-zoo-pacemaker-surgery-191017025.html?nhp=1>

By Ben Gruber

(Reuters) - A Tasmanian devil named Nick is back in his exhibit area at the San Diego Zoo after receiving a pacemaker to make his heartbeat normal.

In January, zoo veterinarians discovered that Nick suffered from an abnormally slow heartbeat and his cardiologist decided that surgery was in order.

Nick is only the second of his species on record ever to be implanted with a pacemaker, according to staff at the San Diego Zoo.

"His heartbeats were too slow and now the pacemaker is going to actually take over (pacing) his heart and is going to determine when to pace fast or slow depending on his activity," said Dr. Joao Orvalho, a cardiologist at the University of California, Davis, Veterinary Medical Center in San Diego.

While pacemakers are routine in humans, implanting one in a marsupial known for screeching, biting and a pungent odor proved challenging.

"Typically when a pacemaker is placed, it's placed within the neck area," said Dr. Fred Pike, the surgeon during the procedure. "But because of the conformation area and the shape of the neck, that's not possible."

Instead, Pike placed the device in the animal's abdomen and sutured the electrode to the heart.

The surgery was performed on May 11 and Nick was released from the hospital later that day. He is now back to feeding and screeching in his enclosure at the zoo.

"So far everything looks really good," Pike said.

Tasmanian devils, which are about the size of a small dog, are native to Australia's island state of Tasmania. The nocturnal hunters face extinction due to a rare, contagious cancer found only in devils - devil facial tumor disease.

The disease kills every animal infected and has no cure. It is transmitted through biting, a normal behavior among devils when mating or feeding. The San Diego Zoo's four devils are free of the disease, the zoo said.

(Reporting by Ben Gruber in Miami; Editing by Matthew Lewis)

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On This Day 75 Years Ago, Disney Animation Changed Forever: The Disney Artists' Strike of 1941

cartoonbrew.com



By Amid Amidi |
05/29/2016 5:52
pm |

The Disney brand is in large part rooted in nostalgia, and the company loves to celebrate historical anniversaries

and milestones. Every event — big or small — is acknowledged through the company's corporate streams, whether it's the 60th anniversary of Walt Disney Records or the 110th birthday of Mickey Mouse voice Jimmy Macdonald.

But today is the 75th anniversary of one of the most important events in the Walt Disney Company's history and you will not hear a peep out of the company. Unlike most anniversaries, the outcome of this event still impacts the daily lives of thousands of animators and ensures the existence and continued growth of the



Animator Art Babbitt, one of the strike leaders, leads a picket at the premiere of "The Reluctant Dragon."

entire American animation industry.

The event: on May 29, 1941, 334 employees of the Disney animation studio walked out on strike (303 employees remained on the inside). The events that led up to the strike are too numerous to recount here, but suffice to say, tensions had been building at the studio since the runaway success of the studio's first film, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* in 1937, and employees of the studio had a litany of grievances from low wages and salary cuts to arbitrary layoffs, arcane bonus distribution systems, and oppressively long hours (including mandatory work on Saturdays).

The strikers vowed to stay on the picket lines until Walt Disney recognized their union. With neither side willing to give in, the event lasted into the fall, turning uglier and lasting longer than either side had ever imagined. In the end, the workers won, and neither the Disney company nor the animation industry would ever be the same again.

"It was the Civil War of Animation," said Tom Sito, former president of The Animation Guild Local 839, and a Disney animator/story artist in the 1980s and '90s. "The strike paved the way for Hollywood animators to earn pensions, medical insurance and the highest standard of living in the animation world." (Sito has written about the strike extensively in his book, *Drawing the Line: The Untold Story of the Animation Unions from Bosko to Bart Simpson*

.)

The Disney strike was not the first animation strike. In 1937, East Coast artists at Fleischer Studios had picketed. (In fact, much of the country had been striking since the passage of the National Labor Relations Act of 1935, a foundational statute of workers' rights that gave employees the right to form trade unions and negotiate collectively.) But the Disney strike was different because then, as now, Disney was the most prestigious name in American animation.

If Disney was held to a higher standard, other industry players would be compelled to follow its lead. And so, on May 29, 1941, the journey to improving the working conditions of animation craftspeople took one of its most significant steps forward.



Animator Art Babbitt, one of the strike leaders, leads a picket at the premiere of "The Reluctant Dragon."

The union is not a panacea for all of the animation industry's labor ills. It is also not the strongest union in Hollywood, not by a long shot. But to this day, it remains the best option for artists who want to earn pensions and medical insurance, and ensure that they are treated with basic dignity and fairness by their employer. Union shops in Los Angeles understand that they can't take advantage of their employees, which is why some of them, like Titmouse, try to skirt the system by launching satellite studios in other parts of the United States where they can pay employees less than a living wage.



Animator Art Babbitt, one of the

While a union seems like a no-brainer for keeping employees happy and content, they are still resisted by people in positions of power, whether that person be the co-creator of *Rick and Morty* or Ed Catmull, the current president of Walt Disney Animation Studios.

strike leaders, leads a picket at the premiere of "The Reluctant Dragon."

Catmull is staunchly anti-union, and has fought tooth-and-nail

to keep the company he co-founded, Pixar, a union-free shop. As a result, even though Pixar is now owned by Disney, and even though Pixar has been the most financially successful animation studio in America for the last twenty years, the average starting wage for animators at the studio remains below unionized feature animation workers.

It also shouldn't be a surprise that Catmull has emerged as the mastermind behind a wage-fixing scheme that has rocked the feature animation world over the past year, with evidence emerging that Catmull has worked for decades to prevent the industry's employees from advancing their careers or being paid what they were truly worth.

Seventy-five years after the start of the Disney strike, as we honor the sacrifices of the brave women and men who improved workplace conditions for themselves and tens of thousands of artists who followed them, we must recognize that there is still plenty of work to do and that improving the industry's welfare is a shared responsibility passed from one generation to the next. As for Disney, let's just say the strike worked out pretty well for them, too: the company today is worth \$163 billion, making it the most valuable entertainment conglomerate currently in the world.

Below: a gallery of picket-line photos and ephemera from the 1941 strike, many of which come from the collections of Bob Cowan, Michael Barrier, and Jake Friedman:



Amid Amidi [More Articles](#)

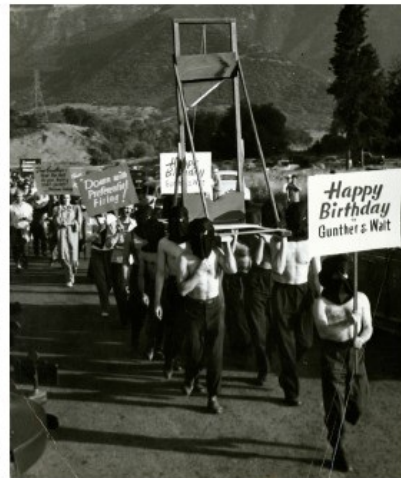
Animator Art Babbitt, one of the strike leaders, leads a picket at the premiere of "The Reluctant Dragon."



Animator Art Babbitt, one of the strike leaders, leads a picket at the premiere of "The Reluctant Dragon."



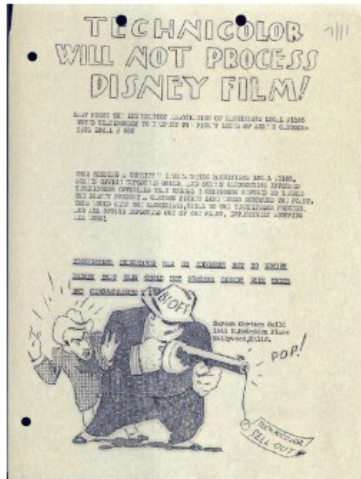
Animator Art Babbitt, one of the strike leaders, leads a picket at the premiere of "The Reluctant Dragon."



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The Headless Bear and the Woman Who Became a Hoop - Beachcombing's Bizarre History Blog

strangehistory.net

Beachcombing's Bizarre History Blog

The Headless Bear and the Woman Who Became a Hoop June 7, 2016

 Author: Beach Combing | in : Modern , [trackback](#)

memoire of M. a. w.
 Which lately happened at Fisher in Sommerfetshire, and sent
 by divers credible witnesses to be published in L. o. n. o. n.
 Also a Prophetic revealed by a pious Country Maide, who being dead the
 fifth of October last, 1613. 24. houres, reulied againe, and lay five
 dayes weeping, and continued prophesying of strange events to
 come, and so died the 7. day following.
 Witnessed by M. Nicholas Fisher, Parson of the Towne, and divers
 worthy Gentlemen of the same countrey, 1613.
 Withall, Lincolnshire/Tenets. For a great deluge, in which five Villages
 were immortally drowned in a pious month.



As London printed for Iohn Trundle: and are to be sold
 wth Christ Church gate, 1614.

headless bear

Headless bears must be one of the strangest of all British bogeys. Where do they come from, what do they mean? This is a question for another day. But here is the single most detailed account of an encounter with one. The events described took place 9 May 1584 in the house of one Stephen Cooper 'a man of good wealth and well-beloved of his neighbors'. Stephen was ill and sent his wife Margaret on a job away from the house to look after a farm of his in nearby Gloucestershire. While there Margaret began to experience some form of possession, which followed her back home. Her husband attempted to cure her with the Lord's Prayer, and from then on in things got sixteenth-century strange.

Then [Stephen] called for [Margaret's] Sister, for that he was not able to keep her in the bed: which when her Sister and [Br]other were come to the Chamber, they kept her down violently in the bed: and

forthwith she was so sore tormented that she foamed at the mouth, and was saken with such force that the Bed and the Chamber did shake and move in most strange sort: her husband continued praying for her deliverance: so that within one half hour after her shaking was left, she began to tell them that she had been in Town to beat away the Bear which followed her into the Yard when she came out of the Country, which to her thinking had no head. Then her husband and friends persuaded her to leave those vain imaginations, persuading her that it was nothing but the lightness of her brain which was become idle for want of rest. Wherefore her husband and friends persuaded her to say the Lord's Prayer with them, which she did, and after took some small rest: and thus they remained until the Sunday following: in which time she continued raging as it were bestraited of her memory, which came by fits, to the great grief of her husband, friends, and neighbors.

So far we have, apparently, an episode of mental illness. However, her visions are about to be shared by the whole household: folie à deux?

Well (quoth she) if you see nothing now, you shalt see something by-and-by: and forthwith they heard a noise in the street as it had been the coming of two or three Carts, and presently they in the Chamber cried out saying: Lord help us what manner of thing is this that commeth here. Then her husband looking up in his bed espied a thing come to the bed much like unto a Bear but it had no head nor tail, half a yard in length and half a yard in height: her husband seeing it come up to the bed, rose up and took a joined stool and struck at the said thing, the stroke sounded as though he had broken upon a featherbed: then it came to the woman and struck her three times upon the feet, and took her out of the bed, and so rolled her to and fro in the Chamber, and under the bed: The people there present to the number of seven persons were so greatly amazed with

this horrible sight, that they knew not what to do, yet they called still upon God for his assistance: but the Candle was so dim that they could scarcely see one another. At the last this Monster which we suppose to be the Devil, did thrust the woman's head between her legs and so rolled her in a round compass like a hoop through three other Chambers down a high pair of stairs in the hall, where he kept her the space of a quarter of an hour: Her husband and they in the Chamber above dared not come down to her, but remained in prayer weeping at the stairs' head, grievously lamenting to see her so carried away. There was such an horrible stink in the hall, and such fiery flames, that they were glad to stop their noses with cloths and napkins. Then the woman cried out calling to her husband, now he is gone: then (quoth he) in the name of God come up to me, and so even upon the suddan she was come so quickly that they greatly marveled at it. Then they brought her to bed, and four of them kept down the clothes about the bed, and continued in Prayer for her.

After this a ghostly child (an angel?) comes and Margaret's ordeal is at an end. **Beach will put a wager that there are no other examples of men or women being rolled around a house like a hoop by supernatural entities.** Drbeachcombing AT yahoo DOT com Note that most of this seems to have gone on out of view of the household.

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Rae Samuels & The Last Bottle Of Beer - Stuff Nobody Cares About

stuffnobodycaresabout.com

Stuff Nobody Cares About

Vaudeville Star Rae Samuels Tries To "Steal" A Heavily Insured Bottle of Beer



Rae Samuels last bottle of beer Dec 30 1932

Will Prohibition Be Finished? – The last bottle of beer that was distilled in the U.S.A. before prohibition and that during several years was a fine attraction of theatres and shows in Chicago – Americans like a good joke, will surely “have lived.” This bottle of beer has been insured against “accidents” for \$25,000.

You know, it's funny how some stories change when you start looking into them.

When I first started to write about this news photograph the focus was on the end of prohibition. But then I wondered who was the unidentified woman in the photograph? It turned out that her story was more interesting than the beer bottle and the end of prohibition.

The woman being “pinched” by the cop is Rae Samuels, for over 20 years one of vaudeville's biggest stars, earning \$2,500 per week. She is so forgotten today that she does not even have a Wikipedia page.



Rae Samuels holds the last bottle of beer

Why Rae Samuels posed for this picture is a mystery. Maybe just publicity for Schlitz beer and the impending end of Prohibition. Maybe the famous last bottle was in a theatre Rae was appearing in. So far I have not found a newspaper that ran the photo.

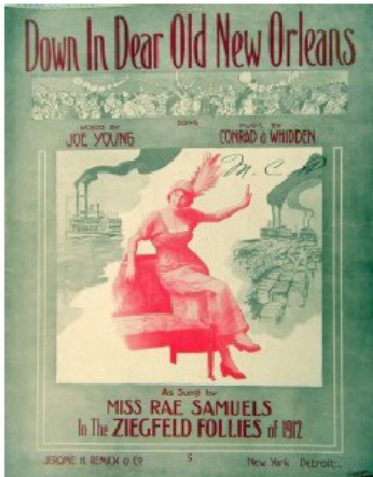
There is another photograph of Rae Samuels (seen here on the right) from this same photo session which is in the Associated Press' archive and dated December 29, 1930. On the back of top photo of Rae & the policeman it is clearly dated December 30, 1932, so there is confusion on the date.

In researching Rae's life, confusion on dates is the norm, as theatrical people seem to change dates and stories at will.

According to Social Security records, Rachel “Rae” Samuels was born in Youngstown, OH May 3, 1889, one of ten children born to immigrant Welsh and Irish parents. Other accounts say her birth year is 1887. Rae loved performing as a child and won her first amateur contest at age 13. She said her professional career started when she was in her teens, singing illustrated songs in a Chicago movie theatre.

Rae said, “No sum of money however large looms as big in the imagination as the first money we ever earn. The salary was \$35 a week. Nothing I've earned since has given me as much of a thrill as that. I was so sure that \$35 was all the money in the world that it never occurred to me to look for anything better. The fact that I had eight performances a day and ten on Sunday didn't seem unusual or hard work. My enthusiasm was simply tremendous.”

A Chicago newspaperman who acted as an unofficial talent scout heard Rae at the theatre and was very impressed with the teen. The newspaperman brought her to the attention of the head of the local Orpheum circuit who went to see Rae and offered her a spot touring.



Rae Samuels Sheet Music Ziegfeld 1912

From that point on Rae's career was off and running touring the vaudeville circuit and working her way up to headliner with her attractive looks and strong voice.

Florenz Ziegfeld caught one of Rae's performances on tour and in 1912 he quickly signed the burgeoning star. Rae made her New York debut at The Moulin Rouge (formerly the Music Hall at Hammersteins's Olympia Theatre) in Ziegfeld's *A Winsome Widow* on June 3, 1912. On October 21, Rae received one of the feature roles in the Ziegfeld Follies of 1912.

Rae's manager, Marty Forkins courted her for two years before she agreed to marry him in either 1911 (source: 1930 census record) or 1914 (interviews). They had one child, Patrick, born in 1925.

Rae Samuels would be instrumental in helping propel the career of one of the greatest tap dancers in history, Bill "Bojangles" Robinson.

The exact year is not specified but Rae Samuels had previously worked on the same bill as Robinson and introduced him to Marty Forkins. Samuels insisted that Forkins sign Robinson as a client.



Bill Robinson, with manager Marty Forkins, holds tap shoes he has used for the last 25 years. Dec 31, 1947
Milwaukee Sentinel

Watching Robinson dance, it didn't take long for Forkins to realize that Robinson was immensely talented. Marty Forkins agreed to become Robinson's agent. Forkins was able to get Robinson great gigs and he became the first black dancer to get solo appearances as a vaudeville headliner. During the teens and twenties Robinson would make over \$3,000 per week and go on to international fame in motion pictures as the world's greatest tap dancer. Forkins and Robinson's management deal was done on a handshake and the two worked together until Robinson's death in 1949. In all that time they never had a written contract.

We should also mention the amusing and dubious press version that Forkins often told of how he and Robinson met.

In interviews over the years, Forkins claimed he discovered Robinson around 1907 in a Richmond, VA restaurant working as a busboy or waiter who had spilled either coffee or soup on him. The story would vary each time it was told. After spilling the liquid on Forkins, the horrified Robinson fled into the kitchen. The manager of the restaurant came over and apologized to Forkins explaining that Robinson was new on the job and that this was not his real occupation. Robinson was a dancer and had taken the job because he could not get any stage work. "They tell me he's the best dancer in town," the manager explained. Forkins told the restaurant manager to arrange an audition because Forkins was a theatrical manager. Robinson passed the audition and Forkins became Robinson's manager.

Rae Samuels worked a wide field performing as a comedienne, usually playing a "rube"; in minstrel shows; and was skilled in Jewish and Italian dialect sketches. But her real strength was in her choices of songs to sing and singing them unlike any other performer.

In 1918 Samuels introduced Irving Berlin's classic *Oh How I Hate To Get Up In The Morning* at The Palace Theatre. A contemporary account of the performance says the crowd of soldiers in the audience wildly approved Berlin's song and Samuels' rendition.

Samuels billed herself as "the blue streak of vaudeville," not just for the racy songs she sometimes



Rae Samuels

performed but because she flashed on the scene suddenly and unexpectedly. Her performances were described as "self-assured and full of exuberance as she sings in her own inimitable way." The *Louisville Courier* said of her, "Magnetism is her chief asset. She puts over a song in a way which cannot be denied."



Rae Samuels "It Takes a Long Brown Skin Girl"

In 1921 the *Los Angeles Times* wrote of Samuels, "Rae is like no other performer: she has a way of her own, and it is so good she has never been equaled in her field. It is useless to 'describe' Rae; one might as well try to analyze a sunbeam or distill moonshine. Suffice it to say she still is Rae: that she has a better line of songs than ever before, and that she jumps here from New York as the first part of a series of big name stars to play the Orpheum."

When Rae was asked how she put so much buoyancy into her work she answered, "I guess it's just a trick of feeling the rhythm. When I sing a ragtime

song, everything about me – my head and hand and feet and voice – all want to swing right in and do something to mark time, just as soon as the music starts. And oh ragtime is so much more inviting that way than even a waltz or military march! You just have to swing with it – you just have to, that's all."

By the early 1930s Samuels' career had slowed down as vaudeville was dying and for whatever reason, she did not transition herself into motion pictures. Samuels appeared in one film, a 20 minute short in 1933 called *The Big Benefit* in which Bill Robinson also appeared. Samuels sang one song in the film, *Poppa's Back With Momma Now*. Searching multiple archives, this is the only recorded performance of Rae Samuels available online. After 1935 Rae Samuels stopped performing and concentrated on being Mrs. Forkins.

Marty Forkins died October 5, 1966 at the age of 76. Rae Samuels died in Mahwah, NJ in anonymity on October 25, 1979 at the age of 90. Except for her own family who placed an obituary notice in the *New York Times*, only one newspaperman in the country noted her passing. On November 20, 1979, four weeks after Rae's death, Jack O'Brian's "Voice of Broadway" syndicated column gave condolences to her family.

3 thoughts on "Rae Samuels & The Last Bottle Of Beer"

1. **Steven Hulme** February 1, 2016 at 3:22 pm

Rae Samuels was my 1st cousin (twice removed). I would give anything to have known her. I would appreciate any additional, reliable information about her.

1. **B.P. Post author** February 2, 2016 at 9:36 am

Hi Steven

As you requested I sent the link to the lyrics for "Momma's Back" to you offline.

As far as other information, there is quite a bit. If you search online newspaper & magazine archives for information about Rae Samuels, alter the spelling of her name several ways

and you will come up with a lot more on her. Early accounts frequently spell her name as "Ray" or drop the "S" in so it is just Samuel. There are a number of interesting stories.

Since you are related you probably know her lineage, but in case you don't have this: Rachel & Marty's son Patrick was born May 12, 1925 died April 25 1996 in Mahwah, NJ and buried at Maryrest Cemetery in Mahwah. He left two children Patrick Jr. and Sean.

Marty Forkins was buried at Gate of Heaven Cemetery in Hawthorne, NY (the same cemetery as Babe Ruth). It does not say in her obituary but I bet Rae Samuels is there as well.

2. Steven Hulme February 1, 2016 at 5:23 pm

Is it possible to obtain the lyrics for "Mamma's back with Poppa Now" ?

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The Ouija murder: Tricking a tribal healer to kill

BY David J. Krajicek

nydailynews.com



BY David J. Krajicek

SPECIAL TO THE NEWS

Sunday, March 21, 2010, 1:58 AM

(Photo Illustration by Charles George/News)



In the fall of 1929, two Seneca Indian women sat stooped over a Ouija board on the Cattaraugus Reservation near Buffalo, seeking to conjure a conversation from the great beyond.

On one side of the planchette was Nancy Bowen, 66, a tribal healer. Opposite her was Lila Jimerson, 36, who worked at a reservation school.

The women wanted an explanation for the recent death of Bowen's husband, Charlie (Sassafras Charlie) Bowen, another Seneca healer.

Slowly, the board revealed a startling message from Sassafras Charlie:

"They killed me."

Who did it? the women asked.

The board spelled out an answer, letter by letter: "Clothilde." It added the killer's address on Buffalo's Riley St. and her description - short, with bobbed hair and missing teeth.

Curiously, Jimerson said she was acquainted with a woman of that odd name: Clothilde Marchand, wife of Henri Marchand, 53, a Parisian sculptor and former student of Rodin who created nature dioramas for Buffalo's Science Museum.

After the séance, Bowen received several letters, signed "Mrs. Dooley," explaining that Clothilde Marchand was a witch who had hexed Sassafras Charlie out of jealousy.

"Her witchcraft didn't work so good so she decided to kill him," one letter said. The healer grew convinced that Clothilde killed her husband - and she was next.

And so it was on March 7, 1930, that Mrs. Marchand, a petit painter who set aside a promising career to raise four children, answered a knock and was confronted by a stranger who accused her in broken English of being a witch.

Nancy Bowen pulled a hammer and beat down the Frenchwoman, then finished the job by stuffing chloroform-soaked paper down her throat.

Her 12-year-old son found the body when he got home from school, and he ran to the nearby Science Museum to tell his father.

Police learned from neighbors that Indian women had cased the house before the murder. Henri Marchand had worked on the Cattaraugus Reservation while creating Iroquois dioramas for the State Museum in Albany, and cops asked whether any natives had reason to harm his wife.

He directed them to one of his models, Lila Jimerson. By 10 p.m. on the day of the slaying, Jimerson and Nancy Bowen were in custody for murder.

Police told the press that Jimerson was an unrequited lover who induced her naïve friend to commit the crime so she could romance the sculptor.

The Ouija board murder became a national sensation, with the women portrayed as untamed "squaws" - never mind that they were virtually indistinguishable in manner and dress from other Buffalonians. (They spoke with accents, but so did half the population.)

Bowen became "the hex woman," described as "sinister, stooped and withered." In fact, she was round and rather robust for her age.

Time magazine painted "Red Lila" Jimerson - slim and attractive by most accounts - as "sallow, flat-chested, scraggle-haired, toothless."

The widower Marchand was cast as a victim. One paper said the sculptor "never was aware of the fierce aboriginal passions he had aroused."

Or was he?

Jimerson told police she had traveled to and from Buffalo on the day of the murder with Bowen but was riding in Henri Marchand's car at the hour of the slaying.

Pressed to explain, Marchand said dismissively, "Indians love to go for automobile rides."

Marchand swore he was only an acquaintance of Jimerson, and that was enough for prosecutor Guy Moore. But Jimerson's kin proved him a liar by giving the press a cache of love letters Marchand had written to Lila during a long affair.

Interviewed in jail, Jimerson told reporters the affair began in 1922 - during an automobile ride. Many more rides followed. Marchand "enjoyed playing a caveman lover to a primitive Indian girl," one scribe wrote.

Prosecutor Moore pressed ahead against Bowen and Jimerson, speeding the case to trial with such fervor that advocacy groups feared a legal lynching. Jury selection began 17 days after the murder.

Nancy Bowen testified that, compelled by supernatural forces, she tried to kill Clothilde with hexes but finally resorted to the hammer and chloroform.

The featured trial attraction was Henri Marchand, who admitted Jimerson was one of his many lovers - "too many to count," he said, including a number of natives.

He said it was a "professional necessity" to seduce Indian women because it made them more willing to bare their breasts for his diorama modeling. He said his wife consented to his free-love lifestyle.

Not long after prosecutor Moore called Jimerson "filthy," she suffered a flare-up of a respiratory condition, leading the judge to declare a mistrial.

At a second trial a year later, Jimerson's lawyer trounced Moore. Jimerson testified she was foolishly in love with Marchand but was not a party to the murder. She implicated Marchand, saying he told her he was "tired" of Clothilde.

After the arrogance of his earlier testimony, Marchand was viewed as a prosecution liability and was not invited to the second trial.

Jimerson was acquitted and freed. Bowen was released after pleading guilty to manslaughter and accepting a sentence of time served.

By the time of the second trial, Marchand had moved to Albany and married his dead wife's 18-year-old niece. Never prosecuted, he died in 1951.

Two of his sons, Paul and George, followed in his footsteps as nature sculptors. Dioramas and tromp-l'oeils by the Marchands can be found in many museums, including Buffalo Science, the Smithsonian and the State Museum.

Lila Jimerson married a local man and lived a long life in Perrysburg, N.Y., near her old reservation. She died in 1972.

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Quite Likely the Worst Job Ever

smithsonianmag.com

Quite Likely the Worst Job Ever

A British journalist provides us with a window into the lives of the men who made their living from combing for treasures in London's sewers

By Mike Dash
smithsonian.com
June 29, 2012



A tosher at work c. 1850, sieving raw sewage in one of the dank, dangerous and uncharted sewers beneath the streets of London. From Mayhew's *London Labour and the London Poor*. A London sewer in the 19th century. This one, as evidenced by the shaft of light penetrating through a grating, must be close to the surface; others ran as deep as 40 feet beneath the city. Henry Mayhew chronicled London street life in the 1840s and '50s, producing an incomparable account of desperate living in the working classes' own words. A gang of sewer-flushers—employed by the city, unlike the toshers—in a London sewer late in the 19th century. Sewer-flushers work one of the subterranean sluices that occasionally proved fatal to unwary toshers caught downstream of the unexpected flood. Repairing the Fleet Sewer. This was one of the main channels beneath London, and carried the waters of what had once been a substantial river—until the expansion of the city caused it to be built over and submerged. Joseph Bazalgette's new sewage system cleared the Thames of filth and saved the city from stench and worse, as well as providing London with a new landmark: The Embankment, which still runs along the Thames, was built to cover new super-sewers that carried the city's effluent safely east toward the sea. The exit of a London sewer before Bazalgette's improvements, from *Punch* (1849). These outflows were the points through which the toshers entered the underground labyrinth they came to know so well.



THE SEWER-HUNTER.
(From a Representation by HARRIS.)

A tosher at work c. 1850, sieving raw sewage in one of the dank, dangerous and uncharted sewers beneath the streets of London. From Mayhew's *London Labour and the London Poor*.

To live in any large city during the 19th century, at a time when the state provided little in the way of a safety net, was to witness poverty and want on a scale unimaginable in most Western countries today. In London, for example, the combination of

low wages, appalling housing, a fast-rising population and miserable health care resulted in the sharp division of one city into two. An affluent minority of aristocrats and professionals lived comfortably in the good parts of town, cosseted by servants and conveyed about in carriages, while the great majority struggled desperately for existence in stinking slums where no gentleman or lady ever trod, and which most of the privileged had no idea even existed. It was a situation accurately and memorably skewered by Dickens, who in *Oliver Twist* introduced his horrified readers to Bill Sikes's lair in the very real and noisome Jacob's Island, and who has Mr. Podsnap, in *Our Mutual Friend*, insist: "I don't want to know about it; I don't choose to discuss it; I don't admit it!"

Out of sight and all too often out of mind, the working people of the British capital nonetheless managed to conjure livings for themselves in extraordinary ways. Our guide to the enduring oddity of many mid-Victorian occupations is Henry Mayhew, whose monumental four-volume study of *London Labour and the London Poor* remains one of the classics of working-class history. Mayhew—whom we last met a year ago, describing the lives of London peddlers of this period—was a pioneering journalist-cum-sociologist

who interviewed representatives of hundreds of eye-opening odd trades, jotting down every detail of their lives in their own words to compile a vivid, panoramic overview of everyday life in the mid-Victorian city.

Among Mayhew's more memorable meetings were encounters with the "bone grubber," the "Hindoo tract seller," an eight-year-old girl watercress-seller and the "pure finder," whose surprisingly sought-after job was picking up dog mess and selling it to tanners, who then used it to cure leather. None of his subjects, though, aroused more fascination—or greater disgust—among his readers than the men who made it their living by forcing entry into London's sewers at low tide and wandering through them, sometimes for miles, searching out and collecting the miscellaneous scraps washed down from the streets above: bones, fragments of rope, miscellaneous bits of metal, silver cutlery and—if they were lucky—coins dropped in the streets above and swept into the gutters.



A London sewer in the 19th century. This one, as evidenced by the shaft of light penetrating through a grating, must be close to the surface; others ran as deep as 40 feet beneath the city.

Mayhew called them "sewer hunters" or "toshers," and the latter term has come to define the breed, though it actually had a rather wider application in Victorian times—the toshers sometimes worked the shoreline of the Thames rather than the sewers, and also waited at rubbish dumps when the contents of damaged houses were being burned and then sifted through the ashes for any items of value. They were mostly celebrated, nonetheless, for the living that the sewers gave them, which was enough to support a tribe of around 200 men—each of them known only by his nickname: Lanky Bill, Long Tom, One-eyed George, Short-armed Jack. The toshers earned a decent living; according to Mayhew's informants, an average of six shillings a day—an amount equivalent to about \$50 today. It was sufficient to rank them among the aristocracy of the working class—and, as the astonished writer noted, "at this rate, the property recovered from the sewers of London would have amounted to no less

than £20,000 per annum."

The toshers' work was dangerous, however, and—after 1840, when it was made illegal to enter the sewer network without express permission, and a £5 reward was offered to anyone who informed on them—it was also secretive, done mostly at night by lantern light. "They won't let us in to work the shores," one sewer-hunter complained, "as there's a little danger. They fears as how we'll get suffocated, but they don't care if we get starved!"

Quite how the members of the profession kept their work a secret is something of a puzzle, for Mayhew makes it clear that their dress was highly distinctive. "These toshers," he wrote,

may be seen, especially on the Surrey side of the Thames, habited in long greasy velveteen coats, furnished with pockets of vast capacity, and their nether limbs encased in dirty canvas trousers, and any old slops of shoes... provide themselves, in addition, with a canvas apron, which they tie round them, and a dark lantern similar to a policeman's; this they strap before them on the right breast, in such a manner that on removing the shade, the bull's eye throws the light straight forward when they are in an erect position... but when they stoop, it throws the light directly under them so that they can distinctly see any object at their feet. They carry a bag on their back, and in their left hand a pole about seven or eight feet long, one end of which there is a large iron hoe.

This hoe was the vital tool of the sewer hunters' trade. On the river, it sometimes saved their lives, for "should they, as often happens, even to the most experienced, sink in some quagmire, they immediately



HENRY MAYHEW.

(From a Daguerrotype by Reuss.)

Henry Mayhew chronicled London street life in the 1840s and '50s, producing an incomparable account of desperate living in the working classes' own words.

throw out the long pole armed with the hoe, and with it seizing hold of any object within reach, are thereby enabled to draw themselves out." In the sewers, the hoe was invaluable for digging into the accumulated muck in search of the buried scraps that could be cleaned and sold.

Knowing where to find the most valuable pieces of detritus was vital, and most toshers worked in gangs of three or four, led by a veteran who was frequently somewhere between 60 and 80 years old. These men knew the secret locations of the cracks that lay submerged beneath the surface of the sewer-waters, and it was there that cash frequently lodged.

"Sometimes," Mayhew wrote, "they dive their arm down to the elbow in the mud and filth and bring up shillings, sixpences, half-crowns, and occasionally half-sovereigns and sovereigns. They always find these the coins standing edge uppermost between the bricks in the bottom, where the mortar has been worn away."

Life beneath London's streets might have been surprisingly lucrative for the experienced sewer-hunter, but the city authorities had a point: It was also tough, and survival required detailed knowledge of its many hazards. There were, for example, sluices that were raised at low tide, releasing a tidal wave of effluent-filled water into the lower sewers, enough to drown or dash to pieces the unwary. Conversely, toshers who wandered too far into the endless maze of passages risked being trapped by a rising tide, which poured in through outlets along the shoreline and filled the main sewers to the roof twice daily.

Yet the work was not was unhealthy, or so the sewer-hunters themselves believed. The men that Mayhew met were strong, robust and even florid in complexion, often surprisingly long-lived—thanks, perhaps, to immune systems that grew used to working flat out—and adamantly convinced that the stench that they encountered in the tunnels "contributes in a variety of ways to their general health." They were more likely, the writer thought, to catch some disease in the slums they lived in, the largest and most overcrowded of which was off Rosemary Lane, on the poorer south side of the river.

Access is gained to this court through a dark narrow entrance, scarcely wider than a doorway, running beneath the first floor of one of the houses in the adjoining street. The court itself is about 50 yards long, and not more than three yards wide, surrounded by lofty wooden houses, with jutting abutments in many upper storeys that almost exclude the light, and give them the appearance of being about to tumble down upon the heads of the intruder. The court is densely inhabited.... My informant, when the noise had ceased, explained the matter as follows: "You see, sir, there's more than thirty houses in this here court, and there's no less than eight rooms in every house; now there's nine or ten people in some of the rooms, I knows, but just say four in every room and calculate what that there comes to." I did, and found it, to my surprise, to be 960. "Well," continued my informant, chuckling and rubbing his hands in evident delight at the result, "you may as well just tack a couple of hundred on to the tail o' them for makeweight, as we're not werry pertikler about a hundred or two one way or the other in these here places."

No trace has yet been found of the sewer-hunters prior to Mayhew's encounter with them, but there is no reason to suppose that the profession was not an ancient one. London had possessed a sewage system since Roman times, and some chaotic medieval construction work was regulated by Henry VIII's Bill of Sewers, issued in 1531. The Bill established eight different groups of commissioners and charged them with keeping the tunnels in their district in good repair, though since each remained responsible for only one part of the city, the arrangement guaranteed that the proliferating sewer network would be built to no uniform standard and recorded on no single map.

Thus it was never possible to state with any certainty exactly how extensive the labyrinth under London was. Contemporary estimates ran as high as 13,000 miles; most of these tunnels, of course, were far too



A gang of sewer-flushers—employed by the city, unlike the toshers—in a London sewer late in the 19th century.

small for the toshers to enter, but there were at least 360 major sewers, bricked in the 17th century. Mayhew noted that these tunnels averaged a height of 3 feet 9 inches, and since 540 miles of the network was formally surveyed in the 1870s it does not seem too much to suggest that perhaps a thousand miles of tunnel was actually navigable to a determined man. The network was certainly sufficient to ensure that hundreds of miles of uncharted tunnel remained unknown to even the most experienced among the toshers.



It
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Sewer-flushers work one of the subterranean sluices that occasionally proved fatal to unwary toshers caught downstream of the unexpected flood.

hardly surprising, in these circumstances, that legends proliferated among the men who made a living in the tunnels. Mayhew recorded one of the most remarkable bits of folklore common among the toshers: that a “race of wild hogs” inhabited the sewers under Hampstead, in the far north of the city. This story—a precursor of the tales of “alligators in the sewers” heard in New York a century later—suggested that a pregnant sow

by some accident got down the sewer through an opening, and, wandering away from the spot, littered and reared her offspring in the drain; feeding on the offal and garbage washed into it continually. Here, it is alleged, the breed multiplied exceedingly, and have become almost as ferocious as they are numerous.

Thankfully, the same legend explained, the black swine that proliferated under Hampstead were incapable of traversing the tunnels to emerge by the Thames; the construction of the sewer network obliged them to cross Fleet Ditch—a bricked-over river—“and as it is the obstinate nature of a pig to swim *against* the stream, the wild hogs of the sewers invariably work their way back to their original quarters, and are thus never to be seen.”

A second myth, far more eagerly believed, told of the existence (Jacqueline Simpson and Jennifer Westwood record) “of a mysterious, luck-bringing Queen Rat”:

This was a supernatural creature whose true appearance was that of a rat; she would follow the toshers about, invisibly, as they worked, and when she saw one that she fancied she would turn into a sexy-looking woman and accost him. If he gave her a night to remember, she would give him luck in his work; he would be sure to find plenty of money and valuables. He would not necessarily guess who she was, for though the Queen Rat did have certain

peculiarities in her human form (her eyes reflected light like an animal's, and she had claws on her toes), he probably would not notice them while making love in some dark corner. But if he did suspect, and talked about her, his luck would change at once; he might well drown, or meet with some horrible accident.



Repairing the Fleet Sewer. This was one of the main channels beneath London, and carried the waters of what had once been a substantial river—until the expansion of the city caused it to be built over and submerged.

One such tradition was handed down in the family of a tosher named Jerry Sweetly, who died in 1890, and finally published more than a century later. According to this family legend, Sweetly had encountered the Queen Rat in a pub. They drank until midnight, went to a dance, “and then the girl led him to a rag warehouse to make love.” Bitten deeply on the neck (the Queen Rat often did this to her lovers, marking them so no other rat would harm them), Sweetly lashed out, causing the girl to vanish and reappear as a gigantic rat up in the rafters. From this vantage point, she told the boy: “You’ll get your luck, tosher, but you haven’t done paying me for it yet!”

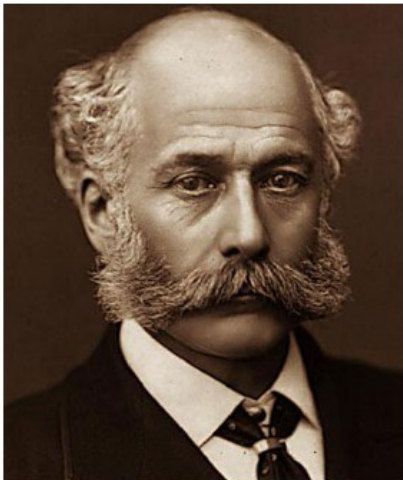
Offending the Queen Rat had serious consequences for Sweetly, the same tradition ran. His first wife died in childbirth, his second on the river, crushed between a barge and the wharf. But, as promised by legend, the tosher’s children were all lucky, and once in every generation in the Sweetly family a female child was born with mismatched eyes—one blue, the other grey, the color of the river.

Queen Rats and mythical sewer-pigs were not the only dangers confronting the toshers, of course. Many of the tunnels they worked in were crumbling and dilapidated—“the bricks of the Mayfair sewer,” Peter Ackroyd says, “were said to be as rotten as gingerbread; you could have scooped them out with a spoon”—and they sometimes collapsed, entombing the unwary sewer hunters who disturbed them. Pockets of suffocating and explosive gases such as “sulphurated hydrogen” were also common, and no tosher could avoid frequent contact with all manner of human waste. The endlessly inquisitive Mayhew recorded that the “deposit” found in the sewers

has been found to comprise all the ingredients from the gas works, and several chemical and mineral manufactories; dead dogs, cats, kittens, and rats; offal from the slaughter houses, sometimes even including the entrails of the animals; street pavement dirt of every variety; vegetable refuse, stable-dung; the refuse of pig-styes; night-soil; ashes; rotten mortar and rubbish of different kinds.

That the sewers of mid-19th-century London were foul is beyond question; it was widely agreed, Michelle Allen says, that the tunnels were “volcanoes of filth; gorged veins of putridity; ready to explode at any moment in a whirlwind of foul gas, and poison all those whom they failed to smother.” Yet this, the toshers themselves insisted, did not mean that working conditions under London were entirely intolerable. The sewers, in fact, had worked fairly efficiently for many years—not least because, until 1815, they were required to do little more than carry off the rains that fell in the streets. Before that date, the city’s latrines discharged into cesspits, not the sewer network, and even when the laws were changed, it took some years for the excrement to build up.

By the late 1840s, though, London’s sewers were deteriorating sharply, and the Thames itself, which received their untreated discharges, was effectively dead. By then it was the dumping-ground for 150 million tons of waste each year, and in hot weather the stench became intolerable; the city owes its present sewage network to the “Great Stink of London,” the infamous product of a lengthy summer spell



Joseph Bazalgette's new sewage system cleared the Thames of filth and saved the city from stench and worse, as well as providing London with a new landmark: The Embankment, which still runs along the Thames, was built to cover new super-sewers that carried the city's effluent safely east toward the sea.

of hot, still weather in 1858 that produced a miasma so oppressive that Parliament had to be evacuated. The need for a solution became so obvious that the engineer Joseph Bazalgette—soon to be Sir Joseph, a grateful nation's thanks for his ingenious solution to the problem—was employed to modernize the sewers. Bazalgette's idea was to build a whole new system of super-sewers that ran along the edge of the river, intercepted the existing network before it could discharge its contents, and carried them out past the eastern edge of the city to be processed in new treatment plants.



The exit of a London sewer before Bazalgette's improvements, from *Punch* (1849). These outflows were the points through which the toshers entered the underground labyrinth they came to know so well.

Even after the tunnels deteriorated and they became increasingly dangerous, though, what a tosher feared more than anything else was not death by suffocation or explosion, but attacks by rats. The bite of a sewer rat was a serious business, as another of Mayhew's informants, Jack Black—the “Rat and Mole Destroyer to Her Majesty”—explained. “When the bite is a bad one,” Black said, “it festers and forms a hard core in the ulcer, which throbs very much indeed. This core is as big as a boiled fish's eye, and as hard as stone. I generally cuts the bite out

clean with a lancet and squeezes.... I've been bitten nearly everywhere, even where I can't name to you, sir.”

There were many stories, Henry Mayhew concluded, of toshers' encounters with such rats, and of them “slaying thousands... in their struggle for life,” but most ended badly. Unless he was in company, so that the rats dared not attack, the sewer-hunter was doomed. He would fight on, using his hoe, “till at last the swarms of the savage things overpowered him.” Then he would go down fighting, his body torn to pieces and the tattered remains submerged in untreated sewage, until, a few days later, it became just another example of the detritus of the tunnels, drifting toward the Thames and its inevitable discovery by another gang of toshers—who would find the remains of their late colleague “picked to the very bones.”

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FALSE: The Merrylin Cryptid Museum

snopes.com

<http://www.snopes.com/merrylin-cryptid-museum-creatures/>

The Merrylin Cryptid Museum

A 'Cryptid Museum' supposedly showcasing specimens discovered by a mysterious cryptozoologist named Thomas Merrylin is actually the work of artist Alex CF.



Merrylin Cryptid Museum

Claim: Real skeletons of mythical creatures are on display at the Merrylin Cryptid Museum.



FALSE

Example:
[Collected via e-mail, May 2016]

I can't find anything in your site about Thomas Theodore Merrylin. Neither his

unusual lack of aging, nor about his basement full of odd skeletons. What have you got on this?



merrylin museum

Origin: Photographs purportedly showing the skeletons of fairies, dragons, werewolves and other mythical creatures at the "Merrylin Cryptid Museum" were appeared in May 2016, featured on web sites such as *Ufunk.net* and *Metro*:

Creepy skeletons of winged humans, bodies of mythical creatures and even aliens have been unearthed in a London home.

The ghastly relics were the collection of Thomas Merrylin, an 18th century aristocrat with a taste for the unusual.

They were apparently found sealed in the basement of a London house in 2006, and the macabre findings might just change science as we know



merrylin museum 2

it.

Now they're being kept at the Merrylin Cryptid Museum, a bizarre collection of the artefacts that is almost guaranteed to creep you out.

The "Merrylin Cryptid Museum" claims that its specimens were collected by famed "Crypto-naturalist" Thomas Merrylin in the 1800s. "Curator" Alex CF writes on the museum's web site that not only did Merrylin have a knack for uncovering imaginary creatures, but that he also resisted aging:

A bizarre quality of Merrylin was his apparent permanent youthfulness. Even in his 80's, he still resembled a 40 year old, albeit of odd complexion, and his few bizarre forays into the eyes of the media only furthered his infamy. He was accused of practicing dark arts to prolong his life. Yet, eminent scholars secretly allied themselves with him, encouraging him to share his collection with the world. In 1899, he took a small portion of his specimens on tour across America. Conservative attitudes of the time condemned these creatures, calling them blasphemous. His reaction was severe and the tour was canceled before it reached California.

A video that appeared to show the museum was published on Vimeo in 2014, deepening the mystery:

Despite the claims made in this video, we found no record of an ageless cryptologist named "Professor Thomas Theodore Merrylin" that wasn't associated with this museum. Furthermore, in addition to his duties as "curator" at the "Merrylin Cryptid Museum," Alex CF is also an illustrator, artist, and sculptor who specializes in dark folklore and animal mythology:

Alex is a London based illustrator, writer and sculptor. His work is visceral and whimsical, creating elaborate detailed depictions of earthen ritual, dark folklore and forgotten horrors. His frenetic lines and beautiful depictions can be seen on band artwork, record labels and book covers alongside his own personal projects.

His personal artwork is inspired by animal mythology, the concepts of imbuing non humans with cultural, religious and ritualistic practices, creating fantastical naturalist scenes, with much of his personal

illustrations connected by stories within a single narrative. He writes and draws to create little worlds so that the drawings have a substance beyond the aesthetic, by incorporating ideology and symbology to encourage the viewer to consider the connections between humans and non humans. He has just finished writing his first novel, *'Seek the throat from which we sing.'*

The ageless cryptologist Thomas Merrylin is an intriguing, but fictional, character. The specimens he supposedly found do not showcase the skeletal structures of fairies, dragons, and other mythical creatures; the entire creation — from the museum, to the backstory, to the video, to the skeletons themselves — is the work of a particularly imaginative artist.

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THE BLACK DEATH AND PROPERTY RIGHTS

DAVID D. HADDOCK and LYNNE KIESLING*

ABSTRACT

The Black Death visited unprecedented mortality rates on Europe, realigning relative values of factors of production, and in consequence the costs and benefits of defining and enforcing property rights. Our model refines the conceptual range of shared claims that exist between open access and private property, improving analysis of the postplague pattern and timing of abandonments and privatizations. Because of title enforcement costs, the decreased marginal value of nonhuman assets induced a lapse of some private claims, although communities continued to exploit a part of those resources informally as a commons. In contrast, the marginal value of labor and human capital rose, which placed insupportable stress on feudal institutions. The predictable evolution of workers' rights to their own labor accelerated the erosion of serfdom. The Black Death thus illustrates demographic change inducing evolutionary institutional change.

THE fingers of one hand count Europe's mid-fourteenth-century Black Death years. Given better data, one might view the sixth century's Plague of Justinian as a close rival, but the Black Death brought the highest continent-wide annual death rates ever reliably documented before or since. Although most regions lacked decent census data, chroniclers throughout Europe recorded exceedingly gruesome qualitative impressions. From scattered but relatively good English, French, and Italian demographics, scholars have extrapolated that overall one-quarter to one-third of the continent's population perished in half a decade, although in extreme instances some locales were utterly depopulated. Even J. C. Russell, a relatively conservative researcher, believed that excess mortality exceeded 15 percent.¹ A modern observer trying to gauge such horror finds little that is remotely comparable. At this

* Northwestern University Law School and Northwestern University Economics Department, and Reason Public Policy Institute and Northwestern University Economics Department, respectively. We have received helpful comments from Douglas Allen, Lee Alston, Thráinn Eggertsson, Fred McChesney, Deirdre McCloskey, Henry Smith, and participants at the Conference on the Evolution of Property Rights at Northwestern University and at the 2001 Western Economic Association Meetings, as well as workshop participants at the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana and Northwestern University.

¹ Josiah Cox Russell, *British Medieval Population* (1948). One of Russell's important corrections involved netting out those (approximately 3 percent per year) who would have died from other causes had the plague never reached Europe.

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residual claimant for human factors, but weaker ones for nonhuman factors, holding constant the technology available for curtailing dissipation. On account of the disaster's very magnitude, the Black Death would predictably have caused a substantial and diverse upheaval in medieval property rights.

II. THE BLACK DEATH

Although the pestilence created havoc among European rodent populations, including game such as squirrels, it seems to have little affected domestic animals other than rabbits and (some claim) cats, although a concurrent anthrax epidemic killed a number of cattle and surely contributed to the human toll. Thus, while land and physical capital were untouched by the Black Death and the drain on the animal population was muted, human casualties were staggering. The resulting massive factor proportions disruption created strong evolutionary pressures on property rights definition and enforcement. A feudal society that had long allocated many inputs and outputs by traditional obligation was profoundly challenged. It took time for institutions—new techniques and new markets—to evolve through learning by doing, but once they had, Europe started on a trajectory toward its modern incarnation.

Speakers of European languages recall the plague (if at all) solely from its impact on that continent. But the pestilence had raged in Asia for at least 15 years before a Genoese ship inbound from the Black Sea brought the disease to Sicily late in 1347. The epidemic was a disaster without documented antecedent across the entire Eastern Hemisphere. No subsequent war, famine, or disease has engulfed such a vast region with such terrible mortality.²³

The Black Death first appeared in east or southeast Asia in the early 1330s, moved westward at a measured pace along caravan routes traversing central Asia, then quickly spread across Europe and Africa.²⁴ Epidemics recurred every decade or two for centuries. England's population did not regain pre-

²³ As discussed in note 3 *supra*, a few other diseases, conquests, and famines have attacked subpopulations as relentlessly as the Black Death did the Eastern Hemisphere. But none of those tragedies approached the Black Death's geographic span.

²⁴ Most scholars argue that the Black Death resulted from bubonic plague bacilli jumping opportunistically to humans from an endemic infection within some unidentified burrowing rodent population (perhaps marmots) with no proclivity to live near humans. The plague remains endemic among many burrowing rodent populations, and occasionally humans become infected, although since the mid-twentieth century, plague has been treatable if diagnosed early. Minority viewpoints note that prior to rapid modern transport, well-documented plague epidemics usually moved glacially across space, not with the astounding speed of the Black Death once it reached Europe, arguing on that basis that some different infection (such as anthrax) was at the true root of the Black Death. For our purposes, it is sufficient that the disease, whatever it was, resulted in rapid, widespread, and massive human mortality and that the effects persisted for a very long time, matters that no scholar disputes.

plague numbers for a quarter of a millennium²⁵—roughly until her people began to settle in North America—and remained under long-run trend for many additional decades. Local populations like Greenland's Norse could be utterly annihilated, while others, such as the Milanese, went virtually untouched. In general, experiences among proximate locales were highly variable.

During the first epidemic, the infected third who survived were disproportionately the relatively strong—late adolescents and young adults—who then became immune. Even so, the mortality rate among prime-age labor force participants was substantial, perhaps half that among children and the elderly. Subsequent outbreaks became known as “children's plagues” because of the noticeably higher mortality among that previously unexposed population. By carrying off a larger portion of the mature working population than did later visitations, the initial epidemic of the mid-1300s delivered the more substantial blow to factor proportions.

The wealthy seemed to have a better chance of cheating death because of their generally superior health and mobility, but excess mortality was hardly restricted to the poor. England's Princess Joan succumbed en route to wed the Castilian Prince Pedro, creating an international crisis regarding the vesting of a dowry that included sovereignty over specified regions. Having defied an order to return to the relative safety of the capital, the most able Muslim general of the day died in the field. The new archbishop of Canterbury hardly had time to settle into office before being called to his maker. And the death rate in Oxford halted classes for a time (whether the university's students thought that a good or bad thing in net was not recorded). Thus human capital was also substantially affected, although less severely than raw labor.

Although institutions (including property rights) change slowly, recurring plague epidemics sapped labor for centuries, which provided economies ample time to adjust to the new factor proportions. Because the disease repeatedly struck the entire Eastern Hemisphere, there was limited opportunity for factor movements to mitigate the disruption, although substantial regional variation during any one epidemic led to unprecedented local migration, thus unsettling traditional, informal mechanisms of social control among neighbors as itinerants became common.

Such features set the Black Death apart from other events as a means of testing the property rights model. For instance, the few wars that have been long-lived (such as the Hundred Years War, which coincidentally was in its infancy as the Black Death struck) have been relatively local with usually moderate casualty rates, while those that have been widespread or intense have ended after a few months or years. Further, wars often consume other factors (especially physical capital) at a similar or even greater pace than they destroy labor and human capital. Property rights institutions cannot react

²⁵ Russell, *supra* note 1, at 248–70.

promptly enough to compensate much for the impact of widespread but relatively brief wars, while factor migration ameliorates the impact of localized ones.

Similar statements apply to most alternative epidemics, even AIDS. Although AIDS has inflicted terrible mortality, soon after its identification scientists decoded its principal means of transmission and thus learned how to greatly reduce the likelihood of contracting it. At present, the treatment of AIDS and its precursor HIV are expensive and ineffective, but avoidance of initial infection is both cheap and effective. As that knowledge spreads, the AIDS devastation will recede among populations that adopt appropriate social habits. Recession of the disease is underway in most economically advanced nations, although poor education levels and counterproductive sexual traditions have retarded containment elsewhere. That is in marked contrast to the bubonic plague, for which the mechanism of transmission was established only in the late 1800s, half a millennium after the disease's best-known attack on humans.

Thus, the Black Death shattered customary factor proportions throughout the Eastern Hemisphere. In the next section, we focus more carefully on the implications of that revolution for the institutions of property rights, returning in Section V to contrast them with those of fixed and variable proportions. The competing implications are then held against surviving western European data.

III. THE NATURE OF PROPERTY RIGHTS

When economists first began to study the evolution of property rights and contemplate their impact on dissipation of resource value, the initial models understandably assumed away many relationships in order to illuminate regularities among a few of the most important ones. The initial models contrasted polar cases—resources that were completely owned with those that were entirely unowned. Unfortunately, an inappropriate and misleading term—commons—was adopted to signify the antonym of completely private. What was called a commons in medieval times hardly permitted access by everyone at all times for any use. There were rules governing a commons that defined who could exploit it and how. Beyond the commons were other areas that nobody made much effort to control and that could therefore be used by anyone for whatever purposes they desired. The latter regions we term places of open access.

Eventually, scholars began to notice that although few properties are completely private, a great number fall well short of open access, being shared across a range of intermediate forms with greater or lesser internal control—within a village, feudal system, family, kibbutz, or some less formal

agglomeration.²⁶ The latter accord more closely with a medieval commons, so to avoid confusing the quite distinct concepts to which "commons" has been applied in the literature we follow Louis DeAlessi's²⁷ terminology of open access (an endpoint) versus communal property (a continuously variable multidimensional intermediate class that would have included, among other things, the medieval commons) versus private property (the opposite endpoint). Feudal labor, in other words, was communal property shared according to evolved convention by serf, lord, and a chain of overlords extending to the sovereign. The term "commons," then, becomes the union of all forms other than strictly private, thus encompassing all the different ways that it has been used in the literature.

Under our taxonomy, Garrett Hardin's famous lament²⁸ should have been entitled "The Tragedy of Open Access." But Demsetz's conjecture regarding property rights formation²⁹—which just predated Hardin's—actually implies a potential tragedy in avoiding the tragedy of open access. Avoiding Hardin's tragedy of open access could cost more than does the "tragedy" itself.

In contrast to many earlier works in property rights economics, only rarely is our focus on either open-access resources or complete private ownership. Instead, we argue that most valuable resources are in a real sense shared to a greater or lesser extent, and instead of focusing on movements of resources from taxonomic class to taxonomic class, we focus on the continuous ways that entitlements vary within communal property. Our starting point is Demsetz,³⁰ but as augmented by the work of a number of scholars, most pointedly that of Barry C. Field³¹ and Elinor Ostrom,³² which drew the focus onto the continuous ways that entitlements can vary within communal property. Along our continuum of rights between purely private ownership and complete open access, our conjecture predicts that nonhuman resources would have moved away from the private end after the Black Death and thus toward (although

²⁶ Alston, Libecap, & Mueller, *supra* note 15; Steven N. S. Cheung, The Theory of Share Tenancy (1969); Thrainn Eggertsson, *Economic Behavior and Institutions* (1990); Barry C. Field, The Optimal Commons, 67 *Am. J. Agric. Econ.* 364 (1985); Dean Lueck, Ownership and Regulation of Wildlife, 29 *Econ. Inquiry* 249 (1991); North & Thomas, *supra* note 12; Elinor Ostrom, *Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action* (1990); and Henry E. Smith, Semicommon Property Rights and Scattering in the Open Fields, 29 *J. Legal Stud.* 131 (2000). In *The Evolution of Property Rights*, 42 *Kyklos* 319 (1989), Barry Field simplified his 1985 article but unfortunately removed explicit consideration of the benefits of exclusion and governance, focusing exclusively on cost minimization for a given level of rent dissipation. A matter of central interest for understanding the Black Death's property rights implications thus became submerged.

²⁷ Louis DeAlessi, Gains from Private Property: The Empirical Evidence, in Anderson & McChesney eds., *supra* note 11, at 90.

²⁸ Garrett Hardin, The Tragedy of the Commons, 162 *Science* 124 (1968).

²⁹ Demsetz, *supra* note 7.

³⁰ *Id.*

³¹ Field, Optimal Commons, *supra* note 26.

³² Ostrom, *supra* note 26.

not always to) open access. Human resources, in contrast, would have moved toward the private end.

A. *Why Do Property Rights Matter?*

So many private resources, so many resentful people. Why not permit open access so that each person can reap what and as much as is needed without selfishly excluding others from that same privilege? In a very real sense that is the primordial economic question, but to many modern economists its answer seems too obvious to state, while to many noneconomists it seems that it could have no coherent answer. From the perspective of a property rights economist, the question's answer forms the basis from which all economic theory builds.

First, for those assets that economists call private, use by one individual precludes simultaneous use by another.³³ If multiple people are considered legitimate potential users at each moment, costly competition is apt to result,³⁴ often referred to as the racing problem.³⁵ Then inputs are expended solely to capture the flow of returns before other entitled users can.³⁶ The resources expended in the competition, the value of which under some circumstances can equal or even exceed that of the disputed resource, could have gone to produce additional useful things, but instead served only to contest control of something that would exist anyway.

³³ A private good (such as a stadium seat that cannot simultaneously be used by multiple people—"the public" as it were) and a public good (such as a radio program that can be used by all and sundry without depreciating anyone's enjoyment) refer to consumption, not to ownership or supply. A public body—a government—need not be involved in any way with most public goods, nor must private goods eschew government involvement. Many public goods are provided by private entities (most radio programs in the United States, for example), while governments often provide private goods (such as seats in sports stadiums). Some who understand the inessential nature of the supply-side and ownership connections nonetheless expect a public body to provide more appropriate levels of public goods (for example, see Robert Cooter & Thomas Ulen, *Law and Economics* 100–103 (2d ed. 1997)). That belief was challenged by R. H. Coase, *British Broadcasting: A Study in Monopoly* (1950), and has come under continuous attack since public choice theory emerged. See James M. Buchanan & Gordon Tullock, *The Calculus of Consent: Logical Foundations of Constitutional Democracy* (1962); Gordon Tullock, *The Welfare Costs of Tariffs, Monopolies, and Theft*, 5 *W. Econ. J.* 224 (1967); George J. Stigler, *The Theory of Economic Regulation*, 2 *Bell J. Econ.* 3 (1971); Fred S. McChesney, *Money for Nothing: Politicians, Rent Extraction, and Political Extortion* (1997); Fred S. McChesney, *Government as Definer of Property Rights: Tragedy Exiting the Commons?* in Anderson & McChesney eds., *supra* note 11, at 227.

³⁴ Yoram Barzel, *Optimal Timing of Innovations*, 50 *Rev. Econ. & Stat.* 348 (1968); and Partha Dasgupta & Joseph E. Stiglitz, *Uncertainty, Industrial Structure, and the Speed of R&D*, 11 *Bell J. Econ.* 1 (1980).

³⁵ Dale T. Mortensen, *Property Rights in Mating, Racing, and Related Games*, 72 *Am. Econ. Rev.* 968 (1982).

³⁶ Apparently, a careful analysis of the problem appeared in Danish as early as 1911, but readership was limited prior to a recent translation. See Peder Andersen, *On Rent of Fishing Grounds: A Translation of Jens Warming's 1911 Article, with an Introduction*, 15 *Hist. Pol. Econ.* 391 (1983).

But in cases where one party's use precludes another's, what ensures that greater values will dominate lesser ones? That is the allocation problem. Private rights to private goods encourage movement of resources from lesser values to greater ones by facilitating exchanges—one party offers to give up a right that the party values by less in exchange for a right that that party values by more. If another party places different relative values on those rights, an exchange can rectify the initial misallocation and leave each party better off, providing transaction cost is less than the potential gain from trade. That mutual gain from trade would exist whether or not one of the parties placed a higher absolute value on both rights (a supposition that would be difficult to confirm, even by the parties themselves, because of our inability to gauge interpersonal utilities). So impeding the purchase of rights from desperate, poor people injures even the poor, a lesson that many commentators find difficult to grasp—wishing fecklessly that the poor received better terms hardly justifies forbidding them to receive any profit at all. The missed distinction is between the relative value of two rights as judged by either party rather than the absolute value of either right as judged by the two parties.

Further, poorly defined rights increase transaction cost, which could be rendered prohibitive. Take the example of two competing uses of some plot—he wants to construct a tennis court because the nearest one is a block away, she wants to raise a garden to stave off starvation. Insisting that the plot be open access should exacerbate concern for the starving gardener rather than ameliorating it—her gardening will be unproductive if he plays tennis on the growing plants as his enjoyment is diminished by unpredictable bounces resulting from cultivation. With prohibitive transaction cost, a likely result if open access were compelled, disentangling those conflicting uses would prove hopeless. So the gardener starves! Rather than imply that there should be no owner, concerns about allocation and transaction cost mean instead that there is a benefit (although also a cost) to contemplating which party would be the appropriate owner.³⁷

As measured by willingness to pay, a wealthy idler may value a tennis court more than a starving person values a garden, which strikes many as an inequity. But of what benefit to the gardener is slaving over plants that can by right be trampled or even harvested by the idler? It would seem best to sever wealth distribution concerns—the plot owner's identity—from the issue of whether there is to be an owner at all. If the plot has an owner, the resource can be used for some beneficial purpose whether or not Pareto-improving exchange ensures that it is the best use (however that is judged). If the starving gardener happens to be designated the plot's owner, her poor

³⁷ R. H. Coase, *The Problem of Social Cost*, 3 *J. Law & Econ.* 1 (1960). Because there are both costs and benefits, optimality will not lead to Nirvana, or perfection. See Harold Demsetz, *Information and Efficiency: Another Viewpoint*, 12 *J. Law & Econ.* 1 (1969).

situation is at least better than under open access even if because of high transactions cost she cannot sell to the idler, better yet if she voluntarily can and does sell.³⁸

And finally, nature rarely provides goods (public or private) in finished form and assets deteriorate unless maintained. Creation and maintenance ordinarily require personal sacrifice, acts that become rare unless use rights accrue to the sacrificing party. Less creation and maintenance today mean a less asset-rich world tomorrow. Then, in aggregate for certain, and possibly for each individual, the economy is a poorer one—the investment problem. That problem becomes especially vexing if one ponders the long-run fate of family lines rather than the experience only of individuals living through a privatization decision. Since in aggregate investments and labor are complements, compounding benefits over even a few generations might make nearly every family line a beneficiary of privatization.

Those rather compelling answers to the initial puzzle—Why does anyone own anything to the exclusion of others?—suggested its inverse—Why are any valuable assets in open access? Although the wasteful outcomes just catalogued could be ameliorated if title were vested in an individual, many resources remain unowned. Indeed, hardly anything is fully owned. Take your home for instance—home ownership includes no right to forbid invasion by neighbors' reasonable noises and cooking odors. To that extent (and more) your home is communal property in which neighbors have some rights, although substantially fewer than yours.

Worrisome examples of valuable but unowned and persistently dissipated resources are seen in many fisheries.³⁹ Nobody owns deep-sea fish until they are caught. Consequently, people waste resources racing to catch fish ahead of competitors—resources that could be conserved while catching the same quantity of fish if pursuit were less frantic. Less efficient enterprises persist because a transfer of future rights to uncaught fish is not credible—a different operation, a stranger to the contract, could unilaterally deprive the buyer of the purchased share.⁴⁰ Even in stressed fisheries, juveniles and fertile females are eaten along with the rest—another fisher would usually capture the benefit of any such fish that were released to grow or breed. So for decades the economist's plea rang out—privatize the fisheries! Yet movement in that

³⁸ The statement assumes that the gardener knows her interests better than do academic scribblers, politicians, or government bureaucrats, few of whom (if any) have even met her. Some scribblers, politicians, and bureaucrats think that is a strong assumption, but starving gardeners should not agree.

³⁹ H. Scott Gordon, *The Economic Theory of a Common-Property Resource: The Fishery*, 62 *J. Pol. Econ.* 124 (1954); and Anthony D. Scott, *The Fishery: The Objectives of Sole Ownership*, 63 *J. Pol. Econ.* 116 (1955).

⁴⁰ Indeed, when a resource stock is in open access, sale of the right of capture or even of the captured flow often is forbidden. By truncating the incentive of especially able competitors, forbidding the sale of the right or of the flow may actually mitigate overexploitation of an open-access resource. Lueck, *supra* note 26.

direction was (and is) glacial. Are policy makers illiterate, or are they just fools?

B. The Demsetz Model of Property Rights

In 1967, Harold Demsetz⁴¹ answered that question—"probably neither." Some valuable resources are open access because it would be senseless that they be private just then. Privatization might indeed confer benefits but would also entail costs. The definition, enforcement, and governance of entitlements would be wasteful when and where costs exceed benefits. Those Demsetz costs can be divided into a capital cost of establishing initial claims versus a marginal cost of defending and governing established claims for additional periods.

Well understood in other applications, the distinction between capital and marginal cost is also important for understanding the evolution of property rights definition and enforcement. Little of the intangible capital imbedded in claim establishment can be salvaged and turned to any alternative use. But unsalvageable capital costs are not opportunity costs. As in other areas of economic life, sunk capital—title in this instance—would be retained providing the return net of the marginal cost of maintaining the claim remained positive, even though that might fall short of a normal return on the initial investment in title formation. A higher barrier must be crossed before an initial claim would be established, however, because *ex ante* no capital has been sunk. At that point, although they may ultimately be disappointed, potential claimants must expect benefits adequate not only to cover the marginal cost of maintaining a claim but also to provide a normal return on the risky intangible capital of claim establishment.

Thus, one would anticipate that privatization and abandonment would have been asymmetrical in the fourteenth century (as at present), with only relatively substantial claims established before the pestilence but only relatively insubstantial ones abandoned afterward. Still, because the pandemic led to such significant declines in the value of most nonhuman factors, the present value of at least some claims must have made that transition. As in the standard variable-proportions model, in the subset of transitions where long-run rents utterly disappeared, the resource would both have become unclaimed and fallen into disuse. However, in distinction to the standard model, disorganized exploitation of now open-access resources might continue in a property rights model if rents, although positive, could not cover the cost of continuing to assert title.

The capital costs can be subdivided. For instance, there is a cost of defining a property that is to be claimed. That cost may be minor if assets are stable and claims small—perhaps the surface rights to a few acres of plains could

⁴¹ Demsetz, *supra* note 7.

clearly be demarcated by easily noticed stones at the corners. But definition can be daunting; for example, what claim solves the deep-sea fishing problem? If a territorial claim, how on the trackless oceans will borders be recognized by fisherfolk and the fish kept within? If particular fish stocks are claimed, how will they be kept from mingling with those owned by others so that inadvertent capture as well as rustling can be controlled cheaply? If a single party owns an entire species, how will the deadweight loss of monopoly be avoided?

Holding the benefits of privatization constant, the Demsetz framework would seem to imply that similar productive resource attributes would more readily be privatized on a plain than in mountains because of differences in costs of property rights definition. Similarly, attributes of land of every sort would be more readily privatized than analogous ones in the ocean. All else equal, misuse of mountain forests will predictably be a more tractable problem than overfishing but less tractable than farmland erosion. Further, privatization both of mountains and of fish could converge on that of the plains with (for example) improved geopositioning satellites, an innovation that makes boundary definition less expensive everywhere.⁴² So the Demsetz conjecture is a dynamic one—what resources are sensibly private varies geographically and historically with costs and benefits.

A more subtle capital cost attributable to privatization arises from the rent-seeking struggle over ownership. So long as a fishery is open access, new enterprises enter until at the margin the fishery's economic rents are exhausted. Subsequently, input owners have little incentive to vie for access because they can do as well in alternative activities. But if the fishery may be privatized, whoever becomes the owner can curtail overfishing and maximize the property's rents. The average return to complementary inputs used in the fishery would now exceed the marginal return to similar inputs that will have to be forced into other pursuits, with the difference captured by the fishery's emergent owner. Thus, with privatization a costly struggle over ownership can easily emerge, and the entire potential rent of the property (in some cases even more!) might be dissipated through competition over title.⁴³

⁴² Because demarcation costs are strictly nonnegative, the maximum possible improvement is less on the plains, where those costs are already low, so geopositioning satellites will offer relatively less improvement there.

⁴³ Terry L. Anderson & Peter J. Hill, *Privatizing the Commons: An Improvement?* 50 *S. Econ. J.* 438 (1983); Terry L. Anderson & Peter J. Hill, *The Race for Property Rights*, 33 *J. Law & Econ.* 177 (1990); Barzel, *supra* note 34; Dasgupta & Stiglitz, *supra* note 34; David D. Haddock, *First Possession versus Optimal Timing: Limiting the Dissipation of Economic Value*, 64 *Wash. U. L. Q.* 775 (1986); Dale T. Mortensen, *supra* note 35; Gordon Tullock, *supra* note 33. If alternative potential owners have different abilities to exploit a property, under some circumstances the most skillful will be able to claim the resource at an appropriate time and in an appropriate manner unencumbered by competition from the less skillful, and rent-seeking dissipation by that route would pose little problem. Dean Lueck, *The Rule of First*

C. *Neither Beast nor Fowl: Communal Property*

Because physical properties have multiple simultaneous uses that utilize a range of scales, nearly any resource is communal in some sense with a more or less limited group jointly owning some typically diverse rights. Some of the uses are completely private—an unmarried and childless individual has an uncontested entitlement to watch a television in a windowless basement, while the neighboring family cannot watch that same set without prior arrangement. The neighbors are, however, entitled to create a reasonable level of noise during a family reunion on their own property even though that noise incidentally invades the neighboring home, just as the neighbor's reasonable noise invades theirs. Hence the two abutting property owners (and other nearby neighbors along with somewhat more distant farmers and construction companies accompanied by still more distant airliners and so on) share communally the "noise capacity" of the properties. Ordinarily, no noise will be tolerated to enter an individual's home if it originates at a family reunion 3 miles away—the communal set is limited.

To enforce those various rights, an individual must bear two distinct types of marginal cost. There is a governance cost relating to management of the attribute within the communal group. Even if control were costless, the ideal would not be to eradicate noise but to limit it so that more is generated only if the marginal benefit to the noisemaker exceeds the marginal cost to incidental listeners. So governance of communal entitlements incorporates essential elements of Guido Calabresi and A. Douglas Melamed's⁴⁴ liability rule of protection where the goal is to optimize the level of the externality.⁴⁵ Of course, control will not be costless, so the optimal level of noise will deviate from the ideal to a greater or lesser extent.⁴⁶ Governing communal noise levels might merely require friendly and pleasant conversation over the back fence and thus approach the ideal. With more numerous or more

Possession and the Design of the Law, 38 J. Law & Econ. 393 (1995). That result will ensue only with substantial heterogeneity of claiming abilities in the distribution's upper tail—if even a handful of the most skillful claimants are of similar ability, they will compete excessively for the property even though the vast majority of people pose no threat to them. More subtly, the most skillful potential claimant must recognize that heterogeneity to avoid a needless race in which there is no challenger. Dissipation may similarly reemerge at a prior stage if the heterogeneity of relevant attributes is endogenous. In that instance, people will race to become heterogeneous in ways that will benefit the investor when some new potentially valuable resource comes into view. Dean Lueck, *First Possession as the Basis of Property*, in Anderson & McChesney eds., *supra* note 11, at 200.

⁴⁴ Guido Calabresi & A. Douglas Melamed, *Property Rules, Liability Rules, and Inalienability: One View of the Cathedral*, 85 Harv. L. Rev. 1089 (1972).

⁴⁵ David D. Haddock, Fred S. McChesney, & Menahem Spiegel, *An Ordinary Economic Rationale for Extraordinary Legal Sanctions*, 78 Cal. L. Rev. 1 (1990).

⁴⁶ See Demsetz, *supra* note 37.

time, similar death rates from AIDS have been isolated,² and death rate spikes during our most costly wars pale in contrast.³

The Black Death left nonhuman inputs virtually untouched; it therefore profoundly altered relative factor values.⁴ Labor and human capital rapidly became scarce relative to complementary nonhuman factors, while the other factors grew increasingly abundant per capita. To a notable degree, factor rewards are said to have atrophied at customary levels across the feudal centuries, but during the pestilence, shadow prices of human factors soared

² Over the past 2 decades, AIDS has killed roughly three-tenths of 1 percent of the world population, and the United Nations foresees a mortality rate of 1–2 percent of the world population over the next 20 years. Thomas H. Maugh II, *AIDS Fight Barely Begun*, Chi. Trib., July 3, 2002, § 1, at 3. Even in the most severely afflicted nations such as Botswana and Zimbabwe, the HIV-positive rate (not the percentage that have developed AIDS and certainly not the short-term mortality rate) now runs between 30 and 40 percent among adults and around 25 percent of the total population. See Maugh, *supra*; and Laurie Goering, *Africa Famine Threat Rises: UN Cites Politics, AIDS in 6 Nations*, Chi. Trib., September 18, 2002, § 1, at 6.

³ Two percent of the U.S. population perished during the 4 years of our Civil War. Ken Burns, *The Civil War* (Florentine Films 1995). Census figures from the various nations indicate that, in aggregate, World War II (WWII) killed between 3 and 4 percent of the combined populations of the belligerents, counting military and collateral civilian losses (including those of the Holocaust)—and that war afflicted Europe for a longer period than had the Black Death. Delayed entry into a conflict fought mainly abroad spared the United States appreciably during WWII, so U.S. excess mortality was perhaps one-tenth of the all-combatant average. Thus, percentage mortality across the whole of Europe during the Black Death might plausibly have been 12–15 times the deaths per capita during our Civil War and 100 times that experienced by the U.S. during WWII. Because the fourteenth-century population fell so far short of modern totals, percentage mortality figures obviously must be distinguished from absolute mortality. Even on a percentage basis, few other diseases, or the odd conquest or famine, have attacked subpopulations as relentlessly as the Black Death hammered Europe. Poland, a central theater throughout WWII and invaded first simultaneously and then sequentially by Germany and the Soviet Union, lost about 20 percent of the total population and more than 85 percent of its Jewish population. Steven Erlanger, *An Inquiry Confirms a Massacre of Jews by Poles in World War II*, N.Y. Times (national ed.), July 10, 2002, at A4. Irish mortality during the potato famine and Cambodian losses on the killing fields are claimed to have approached Black Death percentages. Several Western Hemisphere and Pacific Island tribes and the Tasmanian aborigines were literally exterminated following first contact with Eastern Hemisphere diseases. William Hardy McNeill, *Plagues and Peoples* 176–207 (1976). The U.S. Civil War devastated fully a quarter of the military age male cohort of the Confederacy. The 1918–19 flu epidemic killed more than 6 percent of the population of British India, over 15 percent in the worst-hit regions. Theodore William Schultz, *Transforming Traditional Agriculture* 64–65 (1964). Depopulation along the highways of the so-called AIDS corridor between the Cape and Cairo continues largely unabated.

⁴ Jack Hirshleifer, *Economic Behaviour in Adversity* 96 (1987). Most researchers believe the Black Death was the bubonic plague (accompanied by its more deadly and contagious pneumonic form where the bacillus reached the victim's lungs before death or recovery). Plague is a rodent disease capable episodically of becoming epidemic (although not endemic) among humans but attacking few agriculturally important animals. Diseases attacking humans from loci in other species are reasonably common. For instance, the permanent reservoirs of influenza are among birds and swine, while the West Nile reservoir seems to be strictly avian. But influenza and West Nile can infect humans when contact with a reservoir is close, as for flu between Asian peasants and their numerous and proximate domesticated geese and ducks. AIDS is thought to be a simian disease that became endemic in the human population relatively recently. Since human outbreaks are so infrequent, the terrifying Ebola and Marburg infections must reside in some animal reservoir, although nobody knows where.

difficult neighbors, the governance cost would be higher and the deviation between optimal and ideal greater.⁴⁷

Distinct from governance cost, the individual bears an exclusion cost relating to noise potentially emanating from family reunions 3 miles away. Exclusion incorporates Calabresi and Melamed's⁴⁸ property rule of protection, where the costless ideal would be eradicating the noise. Again, the optimum will not be ideal but will take account of cost, so exclusion of nonowners will not be comprehensive. Although legal institutions may evolve to reduce the cost of informing others of exclusionary entitlements,⁴⁹ those costs will not be eradicated. Exclusion costs appear because people must be informed when a resource is no longer in open access and their exploitation has been discontinued. That imposes an ongoing cost if individuals forget or change across generations or through migration. It becomes necessary to ensure that those informed respect the claim or that property remains functionally open access. All else equal, the more costly it is to exclude nonowners, the greater will be the deviation between the ideal and the optimal.

Notice that we model governance and exclusion as distinct concepts, and thus our approach analyzes a different set of Demsetzian issues than does the approach of Henry Smith,⁵⁰ whose model treats governance and exclusion as opposite endpoints on a continuum. In our model, it is possible simultaneously to increase (decrease) both governance and exclusion. The function of governance in our model is to control prisoners' dilemmas relating to excessive or premature use and underinvestment or excessive depreciation of the base resource. An increase in governance would imply more fine-grained customs or rules constraining those who are entitled to use communal property, all of whom could possibly share the benefit resulting from reduced dissipation. In contrast, increased exclusion would imply a more thoroughgoing expulsion of those without any entitlement over the property. The communal owners might benefit from that, but those expelled would be injured. In brief, changes in governance could reflect Pareto improvements, but changes in exclusion can at best reflect Kaldor-Hicks improvements.

The Demsetz conjecture posits a straightforward dynamic cost-benefit comparison: The likelihood that a resource will be withdrawn from open access increases as the present value of the benefit of privatization rises or the present value of the sum of capital and marginal costs fall. Conversely, the likelihood that a resource will revert to a status open for all users and

⁴⁷ Robert C. Ellickson, *Property in Land*, 102 *Yale L. J.* 1315 (1993).

⁴⁸ Calabresi & Melamed, *supra* note 44.

⁴⁹ Thomas W. Merrill & Henry E. Smith, *The Property/Contract Interface*, 101 *Colum. L. Rev.* 773 (2001).

⁵⁰ Henry E. Smith, *Exclusion versus Governance: Two Strategies for Delineating Property Rights*, in this issue, at S453.

all uses increases as the benefit falls or the marginal cost rises.⁵¹ Admittedly, much of the resource rent can be dissipated when resources are open access, but that outcome is meaningful only in comparison to the cost of avoiding it—small dissipations dominate big ones.

D. *Governance of Communal Property or Exclusion?*

As Field and Ostrom emphasized, neither a right nor a bundle of rights need transform directly from open access, where exploitation by everyone in any way or time is permitted, to completely private, where one party possesses unabridged control.⁵² Much family property, for instance, is held communally among its members, with nonmembers regularly excluded. Meddlesome children, notoriously difficult to bar, impose irritating but limited overuse on things like clean dishes, but it is usually too costly to establish and enforce completely private rights over individual items of crockery. Passersby, in contrast, are barred from using the family dishes without permission. And even the family members will be expected to abide by certain rules—refills are to be poured into a glass in use, not into a clean one taken from the cupboard; used dishes are to be brought to the kitchen rather than left in the yard or the bedroom. Many household possessions are communal property—a commons in the medieval sense.

Ostrom notes that state ownership and management is an alternative to privatization as a means of dealing with the dissipation of open access, but that there are many multiparty private arrangements as well. She observes that neither the state nor the market is uniformly successful in enabling individuals to sustain long-term, productive use of natural resource systems. Further, communities of individuals have relied on institutions resembling neither the state nor the market to govern some resource systems with reasonable degrees of success over long periods.⁵³

All communal properties have institutional arrangements to monitor and

⁵¹ Demsetz carefully avoided the static claim that resources would be private if and only if the benefits of privatization exceed the costs. "A proper interpretation of [Demsetz's] assertion requires that account be taken of a community's preferences for private ownership. Some communities will have less well-developed private ownership systems. . . . But, given a community's tastes in this regard, the emergence of new . . . property rights will be in response to changes in technology and relative prices." Demsetz, *supra* note 7, at 350. The Demsetz conjecture, then, can admit the existence of rent-seeking costs, although he implicitly holds them constant while varying the benefits and costs of privatization. While one society might chronically underdefine them, the likelihood that inadequate rights would be extended would increase as the benefits of privatization rose or the summed costs fell. Private rights could actually be overdefined, but the likelihood increases that existing (although excessive) rights would fall away if benefits decreased or the marginal cost of continuing claims rose.

⁵² Field, *Optimal Commons*, *supra* note 26; Ostrom, *supra* note 26. For a synthesis of Field and Ostrom as well as a great deal of related literature, see Thräinn Eggertsson, *Open Access versus Common Property*, in Anderson & McChesney eds., *supra* note 11, at 73.

⁵³ Ostrom, *supra* note 26, at 1. Also see Gary D. Libecap, *Contracting for Property Rights*, in Anderson & McChesney eds., *supra* note 11, at 142.

govern individual and group exploitation of the common-pool resource. Those arrangements are embodied in rules, more or less elaborate and more or less formal, perhaps enforced or even imposed by government, but often not. Instead of eradicating dissipation, the communal owners would be mindful of the cost of controlling it and search for a cost-benefit balance. Because of a positive and increasing marginal cost of reducing dissipation by increasing the strength of private rights, the optimal level of dissipation will be positive.

Ostrom notes that dissipation of communal rents is mitigated through familiarity among pool users.⁵⁴ Repeated interactions foster an opportunity to benefit from good reputation and to retaliate against inappropriate behavior: "In such situations, individuals repeatedly communicate and interact with one another in a localized physical setting. Thus, it is possible that they can learn whom to trust, what effects their actions will have on each other and on the [communal resource], and how to organize themselves to gain benefit and avoid harm. When individuals have lived in such situations for a substantial time and have developed shared norms and patterns of reciprocity, they possess social capital with which they can build institutional arrangements for resolving [communal property] dilemmas."⁵⁵

Pointedly, many arrangements work best with no involvement of formal government because the users of communal resources often are better informed about inherent trade-offs among competing potential uses. In that event, external regulations may weaken or completely nullify superior communally organized rules and customs.

IV. AN INSTITUTIONAL MODEL OF PROPERTY RIGHTS EVOLUTION

The Demsetz-Field-Ostrom conjecture converts readily into a simple graphical model of institutional dynamics that incorporates communal property between the open-access and private endpoints as a continuous form lying where multiple people (perhaps a few, perhaps many) have an entitlement while everyone else is barred.⁵⁶

A. *The Discontinuous Strength of Property Rights*

Consider the total costs and total benefits of defining property rights where the objective is to mitigate rent dissipation efficiently. Suppose that the hor-

⁵⁴ Ostrom, *supra* note 26. Also see Robert C. Ellickson, *Order without Law: How Neighbors Settle Disputes* (1991); Ellickson, *supra* note 47.

⁵⁵ Ostrom, *supra* note 26, at 183-84.

⁵⁶ Alternative graphical models of the open access to private transition appear in Terry L. Anderson & Peter J. Hill, *The Evolution of Property Rights: A Study of the American West*, 18 J. Law & Econ. 163 (1975), and Terry L. Anderson & Peter J. Hill, *The Evolution of Property Rights*, in Anderson & McChesney eds., *supra* note 11, at 118, as well as the two interrelated articles by Field, *supra* note 26. Those models make no distinction between the capital and marginal costs of title.

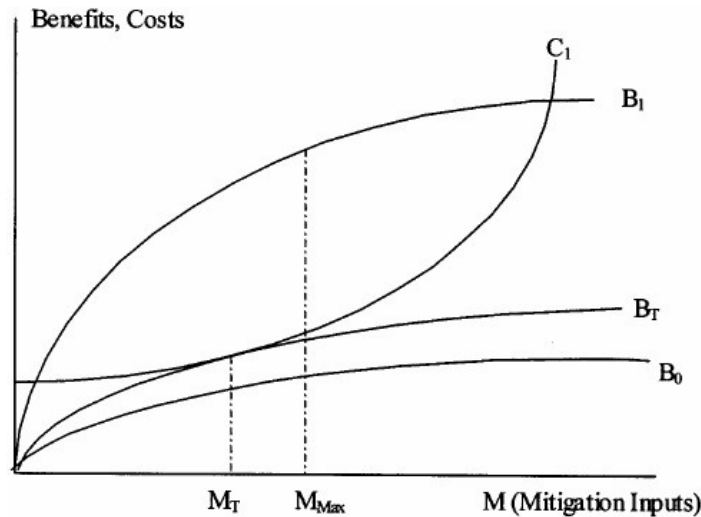


FIGURE 1.—Net benefit of property rights definition

horizontal axis of Figure 1 shows inputs devoted to exclusion of those who have no rights to use the property, while the vertical axis shows the total gross nominal benefit (pecuniary plus nonpecuniary) of that mitigation (shown by the curve labeled B_1). The vertical axis also shows the total nominal cost of efficiently achieving that level of mitigation (shown by curve C_1). It is the divergence between the private interest of individuals and the aggregate interest of groups that makes bearing such cost necessary.

For example, in an ant's society, where each individual acts to maximize the prospects of the nest as a whole, all effort would be devoted simply to squeezing grain out of the land in the most efficacious way. Then there would be no benefit to mitigating dissipation within the nest because incentives to seek private gain at a greater community expense seem absent among those insects. Consequently, it would be wasteful for ants to incur any cost in order to mitigate rent dissipation among the group. Let the ants become human, however, and the individuals are likely to try to maximize individual rather than (or at least in addition to) group prospects. Instead of using optimal effort for production, an incentive exists to divert some effort toward pure transfers of rent, and some of the rent will be dissipated in struggles over ownership. To control that shared tendency, the group as a whole could sensibly expend resources to curtail the dissipation, perhaps by monitoring exploitation and by penalizing misuse. Some of the group's effort would thus

shift from production to mitigating dissipation in order to control individual incentives to divert effort from production to redistribution.

Concretely, individuals have an incentive to divert some of their time from production if that diversion gains them more in the form of transfers from other individuals. But it is not a zero-sum game—we gain what you lose through our transfers (which thus cancel in aggregate), but in the process we lose what we could have produced had we applied the same time to production. Nobody reaps an offsetting gain from the latter loss.⁵⁷ Because the argument is symmetric, you similarly divert effort from production toward transfers from us, and in net we are all poorer. That is the dissipation. Of course, individually and communally we will divert other resources from production to protecting ourselves from your efforts to extract transfers, and you will do the same. That is the mitigation, and it too is costly.

But the productive efforts that are lost will not be random, nor will be the mitigating efforts that are undertaken. Wherever possible, the first moment withdrawn from production will be from the least important productive activities and will be devoted to the most effective mitigating activities. Of necessity, the next withdrawn moment must come from a somewhat more important productive activity (which is to say that the marginal opportunity cost of mitigation will be strictly increasing) but must be devoted to a somewhat less effective mitigating activity (which is to say that the marginal benefit of mitigation will be strictly decreasing). Those features account for the shapes of the curves labeled *B* and *C* on Figure 1.

Given the total benefit curve B_1 , M_{max} is the input level devoted to mitigating dissipation (rather than to producing) that maximizes the value of the resource net of the cost of mitigating its dissipation. The level M_{max} is reached where the two curves have equal slopes, in other words, where marginal benefit equals the marginal cost of mitigating dissipation.

Now examine alternative levels of benefits in Figure 1. Suppose that the curve labeled B_1 is not applicable after all but that instead the curve labeled B_0 is. The latter curve might be lower either because the price of the output being produced with the communal resource is lower or because the prices of inputs complementary to the resource are higher. Inspection of B_0 reveals that nowhere does the value of avoidable dissipation match the cost of mitigating it, so no effort will be devoted to controlling dissipation, and the resource will be in open access. Now let *B* gradually rise. Initially, that increase changes nothing; the resource remains in open access, although the dissipated rents are growing. Once B_T is reached, however, excluding some rights to the resource becomes worthwhile, and weak property rights form. But they do not form immediately to the right of the origin, but rather at

⁵⁷ See David D. Friedman, *Price Theory: An Intermediate Text* 565–69 (1990), for a graphical elaboration.

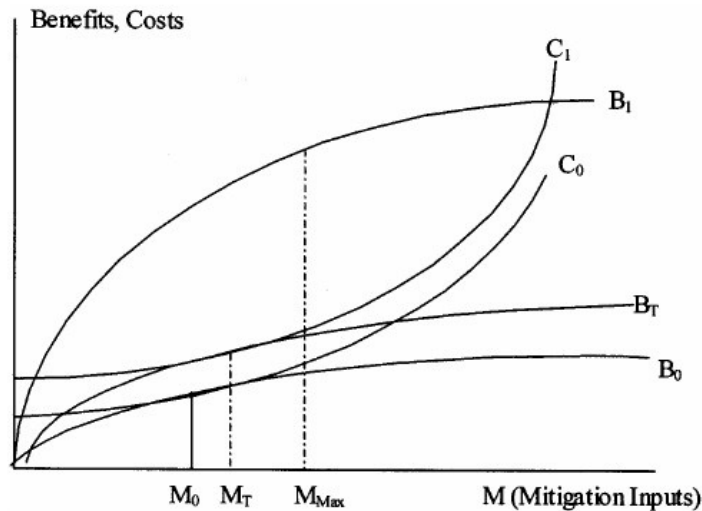


FIGURE 2.—Post-Black Death net benefits

M_T . In other words, there is a minimum strength of property rights that are worth forming.

But that is not all. Notice that the curve labeled C_1 intersects the vertical axis above the origin, implying some positive (fixed) cost required to accomplish the smallest possible level of mitigation or, put differently, to assert the weakest possible right. That includes the capital cost of forming property rights in the Demsetz model and thus encompasses the cost of defining the property to be claimed and of bearing the rent-seeking dissipation to settle on an owner. Being unsalvageable, however, once borne, those costs become irrelevant.

Now suppose that the resource shown here is some amount of a nonhuman factor of production during the era of the Black Death. Figure 2 shows the curve C and the alternative rent curves from Figure 1. But in addition, Figure 2 shows the curve C_1 lowered by the unsalvageable costs of property rights formation. Curve C_1 reflects the costs described above in the Demsetz model—marginal costs, any salvageable capital costs, and unsalvageable capital costs. Curve C_0 is the same except that the unsalvageable capital costs are to be excluded once they are sunk. Inspection reveals that the benefit level B_0 , which in Figure 1 was inadequate to motivate initial rights formation, is in Figure 2 just adequate to maintain those rights given that the unsalvageable capital costs could no longer be retrieved. In brief, B_0 was insufficient to warrant the formation of new rights, because that would have

required the full capital costs shown on C_1 , but was sufficient to warrant maintenance of established rights.

Thus, formation and abandonment of property rights are asymmetric. Substantial avoidable dissipation may be required to bring rights into being, but once the rights exist, the resource will be withheld from open access until opportunities to avoid dissipation have fallen some distance below that level. And if, after having subtracted the capital outlay, there is still a positive intercept of the cost curve with the vertical axis, or with S-shaped cost curves that near the origin are steeper than the rent curves, abandonment will occur abruptly as M_0 is passed. After M_0 has been passed, the ideal solution would move directly to the origin, which is to say, the resource would suddenly revert to open access. In other words, the property right would be abandoned although, since benefits are still positive, the property's use would continue. To coin an oxymoron, it would be wasteful not to waste some rents through open-access exploitation.

B. *The Approach to Private Property*

The preceding analysis of total costs and benefits captured the discontinuity and asymmetry of movements of open-access resources into and out of communal control. That analysis, however, does not demonstrate whether or when any entitlement would be private. In the real world, there are many dimensions over which the communal nature of property can vary—several people have individual entitlements to take game and timber from plot A, or person X has an exclusive entitlement to grow wheat on plot B between November and June (person Y having a similar entitlement over plot C), while X and Y share possibly nonidentical entitlements to graze animals over both B and C between July and October; and so on. As above, to examine the approach to purely private property, assume that the only way to mitigate rent dissipation is to exclude potential users of a resource. For simplicity, the only dimension modeled will be the number of people who share an entitlement, where all shares will be assumed identical.

Such a situation is shown in Figure 3, where MB illustrates the marginal benefit of excluding still another individual from communal property, and the various MC_i show the marginal costs of excluding them, given alternative exclusion technologies or input prices i . As discussed above,⁵⁸ MC would be monotonically increasing in the number excluded. Those most easily barred, being distant, disinterested, forthright, or lazy, require trivial cost. But a nearby, covetous, sneaky, and diligent target population is difficult to bar. Figure 3 shows the marginal benefits and marginal costs of changes in number of communal owners in various circumstances.

Next come the benefits: With some potential users excluded, each of the

⁵⁸ See text accompanying note 57 *supra*.

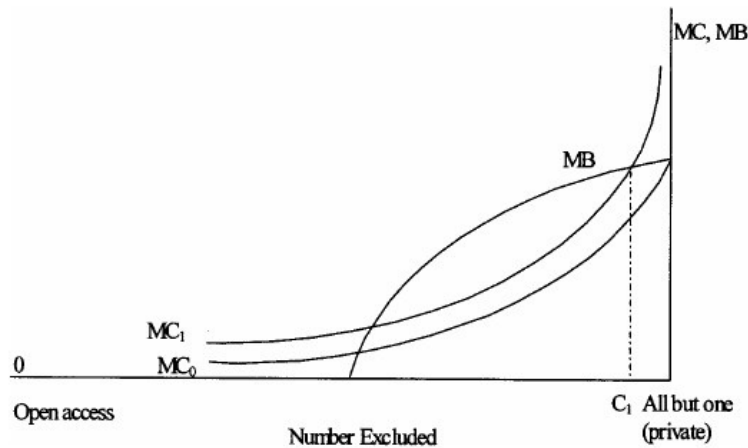


FIGURE 3.—Changes in marginal cost of property rights definition

others bears a larger share of any dissipation that his or her individual behavior produces. Marginal exclusion would eventually cause each remaining rights holder's incentives to converge on the exploitation rate that maximizes the resource rent, but for a large population the effect would be vanishingly small. Suppose a community of 2,000 decided to divide communal property into two equal parts, with 1,000 people permitted to use each. That would mitigate hardly any dissipation. A typical rights holder would now bear 1/10 of 1 percent of the cost of private overuse of the resource rather than 1/20 of 1 percent, but would still reap the entire gain. With positive information costs, people would be unlikely even to notice the difference. But even with a noticeable difference, only those few dissipations that yielded trivial private gains would be eliminated, and overly intensive exploitation would continue.

Subdividing a four-person communal property, in contrast, could easily have a measurable impact—either of the two people now exploiting a part would bear half the aggregate cost of private decisions rather than one-fourth, so the private gain necessary to motivate dissipation of the aggregate rent would increase by a noticeable absolute amount. Not only would the individual cost-benefit ratios eventually converge mechanically on the aggregate ratio as the number of rights holders decreased, those individuals would more likely have valued interpersonal relationships to jeopardize if one person's decision imposed a sizable cost on the other.⁵⁹ Thus, either of two rights

⁵⁹ Ellickson, *supra* note 54.

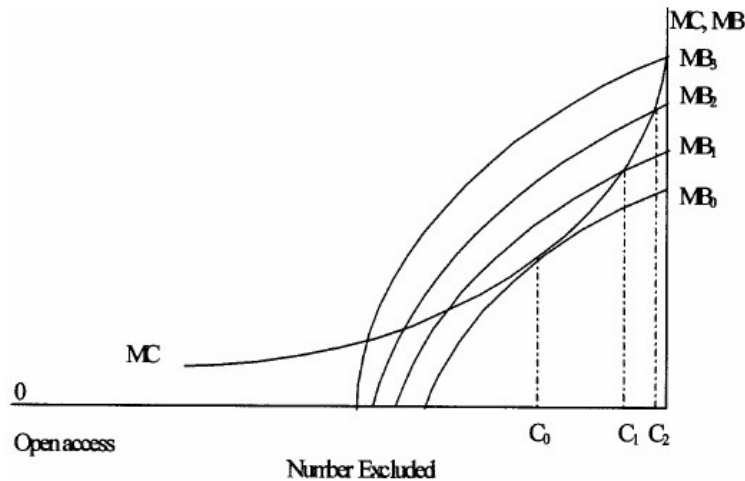


FIGURE 4.—Changes in marginal benefit of property rights definition

holders might undertake dissipating actions only if the private benefit were at least, say, 95 percent of the aggregate cost, quite a close approach to an outcome for completely private property. There would then be relatively little benefit from further severing the resource into completely private holdings.

If in Figure 3 the marginal cost of exclusion were at MC_0 or below, where MC_0 intersects MB at the vertical axis, the property would become private because the marginal benefit of excluding users exceeds the marginal cost for all levels of communal property. If the marginal cost of exclusion were MC_1 , however, the optimal number of participants in communal property would be C_1 , where the marginal benefit intersects the marginal cost from above, provided total benefit exceeds total cost.⁶⁰ If marginal exclusion cost were even greater, additional uses might be admitted for a time. But, as shown above, once total cost had risen so high that the total benefit failed to cover it, the resource would just be abandoned to open access, even though only a subset of all possible rights had previously been recognized. As before, the extent of communal property over a resource would be discontinuous, because there would be a tipping exclusion cost at which title to (but not use of) communal property would be abandoned rather than the number of rights holders being further expanded.

Similarly, as shown in Figure 4, marginal benefits could change as a result

⁶⁰ Total benefit would be the integral (area) under the marginal benefit curve from zero to the communal property size being considered, and total cost would be the integral (area) under the relevant marginal cost curve.

of new techniques or price changes for output or complementary inputs, while the marginal cost remained unchanged. The MB_i represent various marginal benefits of exclusion curves, while MC shows an unchanging marginal cost. Once a communal property had been established, the number of users would decrease as the value of mitigating dissipation increased, eventually reaching sole ownership at MB_3 . In contrast, again echoing Figures 1 and 2, the property would be abandoned at some point strictly before the marginal benefits fell to MB_0 because of the requirement that total benefits must exceed total costs.

As reformulated here, the Demsetz conjecture concerns movements of a resource through communal property of various strengths, not just the extremes of open access or purely private property, thus incorporating Ostrom's and Field's insights. The interplay of the marginal benefit and marginal cost of excluding an additional user would determine the efficient size of the communal property.

A similar analysis could be used to discuss governance. Or an isoquant-isocost analysis could be used to discuss exclusion and governance simultaneously. The implications that have been discussed would remain valid (although still others emerge), so we eschew those extensions in the interest of brevity.

V. EVIDENCE

The (nearly) fixed-proportions model would argue that other productive factors would have been abandoned after the Black Death in near proportion to loss of human life, while in stark contrast the standard variable-proportions model would imply that enforcement of nearly all factor titles would have continued. According to either model, title enforcement would lapse only if a resource no longer had an economically exploitable marginal product and thus had fallen into complete disuse. Both models are silent regarding any impact on serfdom.

In comparison, the property rights model implies that strength of rights would have changed following the Black Death in predictably divergent ways. Nonhuman resources would have been defended less vigorously. Occasionally they would have been abandoned outright, but more often they would merely have reverted to open-access exploitation. Open-access exploitation would have indicated only that the value of the dissipation that rights holders could prevent had fallen below the cost of enforcing the rights, not necessarily that the resource had no economically exploitable marginal product. In contrast to nonhuman resources, the property rights model predicts that rights to human resources would have consolidated. Since it is difficult to remove the laborer from decision making regarding the use of labor, much or all of the increased concentration would have come into the laborer's hands, with

ever higher as those of nonafflicted factors plummeted.⁵ Because feudal factor prices were much stickier than modern ones, the economy became unbalanced, although initially the inexperienced survivors could barely envision the more comprehensive markets now required.⁶ Feudal society adapted poorly to rapid change, and the ensuing stress broke a great many medieval institutions.

I. THREE COMPETING MODELS

The great plague neatly pits three factor-adjustment models against each other—the noneconomist's fixed-proportions model versus the economist's standard variable-proportions model versus a property rights extension of the latter initiated by Armen Alchian and Harold Demsetz.⁷

A. *The (Nearly) Fixed-Proportions Model*

Many noneconomists imagine that fixed proportions tolerably approximates economic life. In a strict fixed-proportions model, a one-third reduction in the labor supply would lead to abandonment of one-third of complementary productive factors. Even granting a less rigid response, wherein harried Black Death survivors increased working hours and diligence, how could they have compensated for such massive mortality? It might seem natural that the survivors would abandon almost, if not quite, one-third of the arable land, the pastures, the homes, in brief, nearly one-third of everything. If that were true, it would be consistent with the economics of information⁸ if the claims

⁵ E. B. Fryde, *Peasant Rebellion and Peasant Discontents*, in 3 *The Agrarian History of England and Wales 744, 747* (Joan Thirsk ed. 1991); Hirshleifer, *supra* note 4, at 103–10; Helen Robbins, *A Comparison of the Effects of the Black Death on the Economic Organization of France and England*, 36 *J. Pol. Econ.* 463 (1928); Nathan Rosenberg & L. E. Birdzell, Jr., *How the West Grew Rich: The Economic Transformation of the Industrial World* (1986).

⁶ In the vanguard of social reaction in both England and France were price-control statutes—each nation enacted a Statute of Labourers that endeavored both to fix wages at preplague levels (or just slightly above in the case of France) and to forbid idleness. But in contrast to the creeping rot and misallocation of the housing stock occasioned by, for example, New York City and Santa Monica, California, rent controls, the imbalances in the latter fourteenth century were so extreme that the statutes had difficulty muting the impact of the pestilence on marginal prices and a constant, if feckless, tinkering with legal detail ensued. Some laborers (although apparently few employers) were fined or imprisoned for agreeing to or merely suggesting wage levels above the statutory maximum, and a few workers even died resisting the statutes. Robbins, *supra* note 5, at 474–76; Hirshleifer, *supra* note 4, at 104–5. There is controversy concerning the short-run effectiveness of the wage controls, but it seems clear that by the early years of the fifteenth century, following several revisitations of the plague, equilibrium real wages were half again those prevailing before the Black Death. David L. Farmer, *Prices and Wages, 1350–1500*, in Thirsk ed., *supra* note 5, 3:431, 3:485–86.

⁷ Armen A. Alchian, *Some Economics of Property Rights*, 30 *Il Politico* 816 (1965); Harold Demsetz, *Toward a Theory of Property Rights*, 57 *Am. Econ. Rev. Papers & Proc.* 347 (1967).

⁸ George J. Stigler, *The Economics of Information*, 69 *J. Pol. Econ.* 213 (1961).

a consequent erosion of feudal institutions. This section presents a nonsystematic sample of evidence from the secondary literature.⁶¹

A. The Fixed-Proportions Model versus the Two Variable-Proportions Models

According to the fixed-proportions model, if a lot of people died, then surely the various economic sectors would have contracted to fit. It will surprise few economists to learn that the model is easily rejected. There were indeed abandonments, but more frequently resources were converted to new uses appropriate to the altered environment. By 1270, well before the Black Death struck Europe, Kibworth Harcourt in Leicestershire had been endowed to Merton College, Oxford, and for centuries the college compiled and preserved detailed records. Completing a longitudinal study of those records, Cicely Howell determined that following the Black Death, "tenants took the more pragmatic approach of converting derelict houses into cattle sheds and barns [and] the villagers were active in tearing down derelict houses to improve others."⁶²

No general shrinkage of resource use occurred. Some sectors demonstrably expanded, as the tables below will show. Such expansion occurred most often (as both the standard and property rights variants of the variable-proportions models predict) in sectors such as animal husbandry and exploitation of forests that were best able to take advantage of the cheapening land. In medieval Europe, those sectors also reflected more the attributes of communal than private property, which fits well with the property rights variant. Bruce Campbell found that because of early-fourteenth-century famines, arable acreage had been decreasing even before the Black Death, particularly in the midlands and southeast counties, but that "after 1350 . . . the withdrawal of land from cultivation coincide[d] with a rise in the average number of livestock per demesne."⁶³ Thus, as predicted, land-intensive agrarian production began supplanting labor-intensive activities.

⁶¹ Where the secondary literature has focused on similar issues, the implicit operative hypothesis typically has been either the fixed-proportions or the variable-proportions model. To our knowledge, only North & Thomas, *supra* note 12, has applied a property rights model to the relevant epoch of European history, and its treatment of the Black Death per se was brief. Being unmindful of the property rights model and often focused on other issues, other secondary writers understandably report volumes of information unrelated to the critical tests relevant for distinguishing among the fixed-proportions, standard variable-proportions, and property rights models, and doubtless have discarded valuable evidence on point. The information reported here consequently manifests a high noise-to-signal ratio supporting rather tentative conclusions.

⁶² Cicely Howell, *Land, Family and Inheritance in Transition: Kibworth Harcourt 1280–1700*, at 55 (1983).

⁶³ Bruce M. S. Campbell, *Land, Labour, Livestock, and Productivity Trends in English Seigneurial Agriculture, 1208–1450*, in *Land, Labour and Livestock: Historical Studies in European Agricultural Productivity* 144, 158 (Bruce M. S. Campbell & Mark Overton eds. 1991).

TABLE 1
LAND USE IN ESSEX, MEAN ACREAGE (Percent of Acreage)

Date	Arable	Meadow	Pasture	Wood	(M + P)/A
1272-1307	242.9 (90.2)	8.5 (3.2)	11.2 (4.2)	6.8 (2.5)	.08
1377-99	164.5 (76.1)	9.7 (4.5)	27.9 (12.9)	14.1 (6.5)	.23
1461-85	143.0 (68.4)	15.8 (7.6)	30.5 (14.6)	19.9 (9.5)	.32

SOURCE.—L. R. Poos, *A Rural Society after the Black Death: Essex 1350-1525*, table 2.2 (1991).

When the most fertile cropland fell idle because of tenant death, it would be added piecemeal to the obligations of surviving serfs. In the face of the traditional, sticky medieval factor shares that retarded adoption of labor-saving techniques, tenant-bereft lords often tried to impose the transfers on unwilling serfs. "William Bacon, the lord's serf, is living in Winlaton, and the jurors say that he is able to hold a bondage tenement in Ryton. Therefore it is ordered that he be fetched back. . . . All the neighbours of Easington are ordered to put waste cottages upon employees or others who can be charged with the farm before the next hallmoot, or otherwise the said cottages [which at that time implied farmland as well as an accompanying dwelling] will lie upon the said village. . . . William Meggison and Thomas Saynynge are capable of holding a waste land called the land of John Batell. And it has been committed to them. And they are to begin to pay at the feast of St Cuthbert. . . . One land out of three in the lord's hand is committed to William Woderof in his absence because it is presented by Roger de Tykhill that he is capable of holding the said land. And he is to begin to pay at the feast of St John next."⁶⁴

The lords' efforts to retain the high per-acre outputs associated with the prior labor-land ratios were unavailing. The drastic population decline meant that cultivation on marginal lands soon had to be abandoned, and those acres were often consolidated into pasture. L. R. Poos notes that "the post-Black Death period witnessed shifts in local agriculture and land use as animals gained in relative importance to grain."⁶⁵ Poos's Essex data, summarized in Table 1, corroborate Campbell's findings from the Midlands and Norfolk.⁶⁶ Using postmortem records from well before until well after the initial epidemic, Poos documented that across the entire fourteenth century arable acreage declined by 32.3 percent, with a continuing but smaller decline through the subsequent century. In contrast, pasture acreage increased by 149 percent and woodland more than doubled. Those results are radically inconsistent with the fixed-proportions model.

⁶⁴ From the Durham hallmoot book as reported by Rosemary Horrox, *The Black Death 1347-50* (1994).

⁶⁵ L. R. Poos, *A Rural Society after the Black Death: Essex 1350-1525*, at 9 (1991).

⁶⁶ Campbell, *supra* note 63.

TABLE 2
LAND USE IN ARDEN, WARWICKSHIRE, MEAN ACREAGE (Percent of Acreage)

Date	Arable	Meadow	Pasture	Wood	$(M + P)/A$
1345–55	1,790 (70.4)	209 (8.2)	182 (7.2)	328 (12.9)	.22
1496–1500	1,193 (34.5)	299 (8.6)	1,319 (38.1)	646 (18.7)	1.36

SOURCE.—Christopher Dyer, *Occupation of the Land: The West Midlands*, in 3 *The Agrarian History of England and Wales*, table 2.9 (Joan Thirsk ed. 1991).

TABLE 3
LAND USE IN THE AVON VALLEY AND FILDON, WARWICKSHIRE,
MEAN ACREAGE (Percent of Acreage)

Date	Arable	Meadow	Pasture	Wood	$(M + P)/A$
1345–55	2,533 (95.1)	118 (4.4)	12 (.5)	0 (0)	.05
1496–1500	2,850 (56.7)	475 (9.4)	1,654 (32.9)	48 (1.0)	.75

SOURCE.—Christopher Dyer, *Occupation of the Land: The West Midlands*, in 3 *The Agrarian History of England and Wales*, table 2.8 (Joan Thirsk ed. 1991).

Christopher Dyer⁶⁷ found similar postepidemic shifts in land use in the West Midlands in surviving land conveyance and transfer documents. In two parts of Warwickshire, the percentage of acreage in arable fell by nearly half, while pastures increased almost by a factor of 10, as shown in Table 2. The percentage of exploited land in meadow and woodland also increased, although not nearly as dramatically as pasture. Perhaps as a result of inter-regional migration, absolute acreage in use increased even for arable in a few locations, as seen in Table 3. Even in those instances, land-intensive sectors grew more strongly. In Warwickshire at least, use of nonhuman factors had not fallen along with the human factors. Dyer also reports land use changes from Gloucestershire postmortem inquisitions and Worcestershire court rolls that corroborate the Warwickshire results, as seen in Tables 4 and 5.

Although the dates of the first observations are more than 3 decades after the Black Death, the Worcestershire data nonetheless show a continuing relative shift away from arable, which suggests the impact of episodically recurring epidemics. Dyer's findings for Staffordshire (which we do not recapitulate) were consistent.

We take it that the fixed-proportions model can safely be put aside. There are puzzles in the data, but the fixed-proportions model offers no insight. Not only did human and nonhuman factor use fail to decrease in coordination, the use of some nonhuman factors increased following the Black Death. How do the other models account for that?

⁶⁷ Christopher Dyer, *Occupation of the Land: The West Midlands*, in Thirsk ed., *supra* note 5, at 3:77.

TABLE 4
LAND USE IN GLOUCESTERSHIRE, MEAN ACREAGE (Percent of Acreage)

Date	Arable	Meadow	Pasture	Wood	$(M + P)/A$
1349-54	2,122 (83.1)	214 (8.4)	55 (2.2)	81 (3.2)	.13
1485-1500	1,390 (46.0)	410 (13.6)	1,042 (34.5)	181 (6.0)	1.04

SOURCE.—Christopher Dyer, *Occupation of the Land: The West Midlands*, in 3 *The Agrarian History of England and Wales*, table 2.10 (Joan Thirsk ed. 1991).

TABLE 5
LAND USE IN BROMSGROVE AND KING'S NORTON, WORCHESTERSHIRE,
MEAN ACREAGE (Percent of Acreage)

Date	Arable	Meadow	Pasture	Wood	$(M + P)/A$
1386-96	409 (81.3)	76 (15.1)	12 (2.4)	6 (1.2)	.22
1494-1504	848 (53.3)	278 (17.5)	352 (22.1)	114 (7.2)	.74

SOURCE.—Christopher Dyer, *Occupation of the Land: The West Midlands*, in 3 *The Agrarian History of England and Wales*, table 2.11 (Joan Thirsk ed. 1991).

Since the property rights model is an extension of the variable-proportions model, many predictions are similar. For instance, each would view characteristic land use changes the same way—nonhuman factors became cheap following the Black Death but human factors became expensive. In a frictionless society, there would have been a prompt substitution of the one for the other.⁶⁸ The marginal product of human factors would have increased, while the marginal product of nonhuman factors would have decreased. The lord of the manor in that frictionless society would of necessity have acquiesced to inevitable changes in farming techniques by reducing his share, thus persuading each peasant voluntarily to cultivate more arable land in a less labor-intensive fashion and to use more pasture.

Even so, farming would have consumed more labor than did herding. Since it was relatively land intensive, animal husbandry would have expanded more as a result of the fall in land rents. The price of meat and cheese would have fallen relative to the price of farmed products. Consumers would in consequence have shifted consumption toward meat and cheese and, therefore, in a relative if not necessarily absolute sense, away from arable products. So even though land would have been substituted for labor in all sectors of agriculture, the substitution would have proven relatively weaker in arable.

⁶⁸ There were strong frictions—many feudal institutions had for centuries been traditional, and consequently markets were attenuated. As among the East Germans following the fall of the Berlin Wall, there was relatively little human capital specialized to coping with markets. There was a strong interest group—manor lords and their overlords—that would be severely injured by a shift from a feudal to a market economy. It will be seen that eventually those frictions were overwhelmed, but we put that aside pending our discussion of serfdom *infra*.

TABLE 6
CHANGES IN NET YIELD PER ACRE IN NORFOLK

Demesne	Percent Change, 1300-1324 to 1400-1424
Hindolveston	-48.1
Martham	-41.2
Plumstead	-31.0
Sedgeford	-25.4
Taverham	15.6
Mean (average)	-31.3

SOURCE.—Bruce M. S. Campbell, *Land, Labour, Livestock, and Productivity Trends in English Seigneurial Agriculture, 1208-1450*, in *Land, Labour and Livestock: Historical Studies in European Agricultural Productivity*, table 6.7 (Bruce M. S. Campbell & Mark Overton eds. 1991).

That result shows clearly in each of the above tables. Even in regions where arable acreage increased, as shown in Tables 3 and 5, the share of total acreage in use fell.

The increased marginal product of labor is confirmed by a sharp wage increase that has been documented by numerous historians and will enter the discussion below when changes in serfdom are discussed. The decreased marginal product of arable land can be confirmed from net yields per acre. As shown in Table 6, Campbell's Norfolk data⁶⁹ indicate a 31 percent decline in that yield across five different locales and five separate crops—wheat, rye, barley, oats, and legumes. Only Taverham appears as an outlier.

If the fixed-proportions model was accurate, one would expect no such per-acre yield decreases since the application of other productive factors to each acre of land in use would be similar both before and after the Black Death. The other models, in contrast, would predict a decreased application of complementary human factors to each acre after the epidemic and thus precisely the falling per acre yields seen here. The predictions of the fixed-proportions model fail once again. Discard it.

B. The Standard Variable-Proportions Model versus the Property Rights Variant

All three models can encompass positive levels of resource abandonment: "Some abandonment of arable resources was well-nigh universal, and even on manors which survived as grain producers land was taken out of cultivation."⁷⁰ But the evidence of the previous section is inconsistent with the

⁶⁹ Campbell, *supra* note 63.

⁷⁰ R. H. Britnell, *Occupation of the Land: Eastern England*, in Thirsk ed., *supra* note 5, at 53, 56.

fixed-proportions model, although consistent with the implications of either of the others. The two survivors part company regarding other implications.

By recognizing that effective maintenance of title is costly, the property rights model would predict more failure to enforce title following the Black Death than would the standard variable-proportions model—the potential for a positive marginal product would have to utterly disappear before resources were abandoned under the standard model, but title to still other resources whose marginal products fell to modest positive levels would be abandoned under the property rights model. Without being able to measure marginal products directly, however, it is difficult to quantify exactly what would prove convincing as more abandonment of title.

An informed intuition helps. There is extensive evidence of the abandonment of marginal lands in the wake of the Black Death. The population increase of the thirteenth century atop a tradition of primogeniture had induced the junior sons of the manorial lords, accompanied by some offspring of their father's serfs, to form new manors on previously unclaimed lands. Each of the models can survive discovery that some of those more recent manors were abandoned after the Black Death, with the land reverting to open access. When does "some" become "an awful lot"? There was extensive abandonment in the West Midlands in the late fourteenth century, part of an extended process that continued through the end of the fifteenth century: "[A] unique source for Warwickshire, the list of desertions compiled by John Rous, a local chantry priest and chronicler, shows that sixty villages, or about half of the county's total, had been deserted by about 1486. . . . The first important phase of total desertion of villages came in the late fourteenth century. . . . Eleven of the twenty-six holdings in Weston-juxta-Cherington (War.) were vacant in 1355."⁷¹

Similar evidence of intensive and extensive abandonment comes from Yorkshire, East Anglia, Norfolk, and Suffolk.⁷² Although certainly not conclusive, abandonment of 42 percent of one Warwickshire village's holdings in well under a decade and the complete desertion of half the county's villages after a century and a quarter of recurring epidemics is impressive. We conjecture that few disciples of the standard variable-proportions model would have offered predictions of such magnitudes of abandonment before seeing that data. Nor would one predict that all of that land became literally deserted as opposed to being exploited by a number of people under a nonexclusionary informality. Such Bayesian predictions might, of course, be wrong, but they are consistent only with the property rights model.

In the West Midlands, "from 1349 to the end of the fifteenth century shrinkage of rural settlement is found in all parts of the region, a shrinkage

⁷¹ Dyer, *supra* note 67, at 85–86.

⁷² Colin Platt, *King Death: The Black Death and Its Aftermath in Late-Medieval England* 15–16 (1996); Campbell, *supra* note 63.

that appears in decreasing numbers of manorial tenants and in the abandonment and decay of dwellings. . . . [S]hrinkage of settlement seems to have been initiated by the Black Death of 1349."⁷³

P. D. A. Harvey found that near London the pattern of abandonment varied greatly but that the greatest depopulation occurred where intensive cultivation had once been common: "[I]t seems likely that decrease in the demand for land following the Black Death and the general shrinkage of settlements reduced some of these places to a size that made them no longer viable communities."⁷⁴ Those home county abandonments often accompanied reversion of the land to waste, particularly when manors contracted or disappeared because the landlord could attract no new tenants.⁷⁵

Both the variable-proportions and the property rights models would predict abandonment whenever positive marginal products dissolved, so the more crucial prediction concerns resources with positive marginal products that were insufficient to merit the cost of enforcing a claim. But if claims were unenforced while marginal products were positive, one would expect informal exploitation of the resource. Although for a time prior owners may have maintained a pretense of ownership, for all practical purposes the resource would have fallen into open access.

Although the evidence treated the fixed-proportions model harshly, it does not distinguish as compellingly between the variable-proportions and property rights alternatives, but it is surely suggestive. By the 1420s, for instance, one-third of Kibworth Harcourt was without tenants.⁷⁶ "It would seem that the land was simply allowed to lie fallow, grazed by the village flocks. But if this was the case, it is difficult to understand why some tenants were prepared to lease the grazing from some of these virgates [although] for one-third of the [customary] rent."⁷⁷ Perhaps understanding that is not as difficult as Howell believes. It is inescapable that untenanted land that was being used by unspecified members of the village for uncompensated (and probably unimproved) grazing had a positive marginal product, but one so meager that the legal owner, Merton College, was unwilling to bear the cost to exclude those unauthorized users. The property rights model would interpret parallel rents being paid for other grazing as evidence that avoiding open-access dissipation on superior land, even when used only for grazing, continued to afford sufficient benefit to justify Merton's bearing the burden of enforcing its claims. Because the latter holdings were superior, individuals would have been willing to pay rent for the privilege of excluding other potential users.

⁷³ P. D. A. Harvey, *Occupation of the Land: The Home Counties*, in *The Agrarian History of England and Wales*, Vol. 3, 106, 108–9 (Joan Thirsk ed. 1991).

⁷⁴ *Id.* at 111.

⁷⁵ *Id.* at 116.

⁷⁶ Howell, *supra* note 62, at 50.

⁷⁷ *Id.* at 53.

That ability to exclude, in turn, would have given a renter an incentive to optimize the plot's exploitation and to improve it to enhance the renter's return.

Although the prior quotation indicates that people used land over which they had no legal right, presumably too intensively to maximize its output, understandably they hesitated to make site-specific investments because open-access dissipation was less than the cost of asserting title in order to capitalize on the investment. "It is interesting that in spite of the acute shortage of wood . . . none of this surplus land was planted as woodland. Between 1422-32, no less than seven persons were prosecuted for felling ash, two for felling elms and fines were taken for felling apple trees and willows, but there is no record of systematic tree planting until the seventeenth century."⁷⁸

Harold Fox notes that at least one court issued a general order to peasants to make good their boundary marks, although he does not indicate how effective the order was.⁷⁹ Why would a court care if cultivators kept track of their boundaries? If they were not worried about encroachment, why should the court? The answer is that the peasants were not the recognized owners of the land, which would have been the lord of the manor. Before the Black Death, the land market had cleared (or, conceivably, it had been in shortage because of the traditional and sticky customary sums and services due the lord), so peasant self-interest had incidentally assured that nobody could use land without recompensing the lord.⁸⁰ A cleared market implied a willing and rent-paying tenant who would report encroachments. Rents did not fall to market-clearing levels for decades after the Black Death, however, so land went into surplus. That would have enabled surviving peasants to expand their cultivated acreage without encroaching on neighboring holdings and therefore without being forced by their fellows to acknowledge the expansion to the lord. In such instances, they were enabled to evade the lord's customary share.

As long as there remained open patches to be taken up by every ambitious farmer, there was no competition among them and thus little incentive to complain about illicit use. In 1407, at Kibworth Harcourt, tenants began defiantly to withhold information concerning abandonments.⁸¹ Apparently, it had become too costly for the lord to control the property closely given the necessity for increased direct monitoring coupled with gradually falling rents. Despite the lords' occasional unwillingness to enforce title, it is clear that most properties remained in use. In Compton Verney, "there were many problems of trespass, both within the village and from nearby. . . . The lord scarcely knew what was happening to his once orderly manor, and, more

⁷⁸ *Id.* at 55.

⁷⁹ Fox, *supra* note 10, at 61.

⁸⁰ Fryde, *supra* note 5, at 754.

⁸¹ Howell, *supra* note 62, at 50.

important, the leading villagers seem to have taken no action to remedy this lack of control."⁸² What had been the lord's property rights had sometimes become peasants' usufruct rights.

"The woodlands saw a shift from arable to pasture, reversing the trends before 1300. . . . The increase in livestock led to stresses among the neighbors, with complaints that selfish individuals were keeping excessive numbers of animals on the common pastures."⁸³ The passage indicates that many pastures continued to be communal property rather than private holdings but that communal rules were simultaneously eroding. Some resources that had been held as communal property before the Black Death continued in that status but had moved toward (although not to) open access.

C. *The Decline of Serfdom*

Once it becomes unattractive for an owner to continue bearing the cost to enforce title, who will object if the entitlement is abandoned? Nor will strife result when the benefits of claiming a resource are too low to motivate undertaking the investment. In distinction, there will frequently be contention among mutually exclusive alternative owners when it becomes attractive to claim or consolidate title to a resource of growing value. The erosion of serfdom was such an instance. This section examines the process through which stronger property rights in human labor emerged during that episode.

Of the three models, only the property rights version yields obvious predictions regarding the impact of the plague on serfdom. Serf labor was a form of communal property.⁸⁴ As with other forms of communal property, joint ownership rights generated some dissipation, but as long as the marginal product of labor was low, the value dissipated was relatively unimportant and would not support a substantial control cost. As labor grew dramatically scarcer across the many plague decades, the marginal value of the dissipation grew. The property rights model predicts that to mitigate that dissipation some individuals would devote resources to strengthening claims over that resource of increasing per-unit value. The conjecture is that traditional bonds on feudal labor would weaken and workers would gain increased ability to negotiate over wage levels and to change the nonpecuniary terms of work relationships.⁸⁵

⁸² Christopher Dyer, David Hey, & Joan Thirsk, Lowland Vales, in *The English Rural Landscape* 78, 86 (Joan Thirsk ed. 2000).

⁸³ Christopher Dyer, Woodlands and Wood-Pasture in Western England, in Thirsk ed., *supra* note 82, at 97, 113–14.

⁸⁴ See text accompanying notes 17–22 *supra*.

⁸⁵ Barzel, *supra* notes 20 and 21, argues that, because of a worker's own ability to adjust labor effort coupled with the cost to anyone else of monitoring that adjustment, workers are likely to acquire increased rights in their own labor as the value of labor rent dissipation grows. Hirshleifer, *supra* note 4, at 109–10, offers a brief, generally parallel account of the decline of serfdom, albeit without arguing that the communal property nature of serf labor was a causal factor.

The other stakeholders did not willingly relinquish their claims, and history provides insight into the process by which stronger property rights are claimed from a weaker status. Almost immediately, workers began to refuse to perform customary tasks unless more compensation and fewer servile obligations were forthcoming. On account of regional variability, some lords saw many of their serfs succumb to the plague, while other lords lost few. Facing an alternative of hardly any labor at all, the bereft lords agreed to the serf's demands and then refused to return runaways to their home manors. The lords' age-old tradition of labor market noncompetition had begun to crack.

In response, in 1349, as the Black Death still raged, Edward III forbade the payment of wages to workers higher than those paid in 1346, as well as movement of workers from their existing jobs. Initially urban areas cooperated in enforcing the statute: "Several bakers' servants were indicted in July 1349 for forming a conspiracy not to work for their masters except at double or treble the wages formerly given, and one William Amery was sent to prison for having demanded 5s. for some work which another mason then did for 12d."⁸⁶

Enforcement of the decree proved difficult and sporadic, and complaints from employers led Parliament to codify similar provisions as the Statute of Labourers of 1351. The statute explicitly laid out maximum wages that could be paid for various types of workers, and workers who did not swear obedience to the statute could be sent to jail.

In some places, authorities tried to enforce the statute strictly, and when the economy began to stabilize by 1354, wages were lower than they had been earlier in the decade, although even then they appeared to remain near the statutory wage caps.⁸⁷ Consider, however, that modern price and wage controls are often evaded by employing fallacious categories regarding the transacted items. Although we have yet to find evidence bearing on the possibility, unsuspecting officials might, for instance, have taken a shepherd who was claimed by a desperate lord to be a carpenter to be statutorily entitled to a wage that was in truth a violation.

Other authorities began treating the "fines" for violations as though they were merely a tax for financing the Hundred Years War rather than an effort to cap wage rates.⁸⁸ Maintaining marginal wage rates at pre-Black Death levels would have required imposing prohibitory fines on violators, a set that shortly would have consisted only of the unsuspecting. Prohibitive fines would generate no war revenue, however, and a monopolist does not want to quote a price so high that no customer will buy. Maximizing revenue, in other words, would have necessitated a substantially more moderate fine/tax, one that would induce violations of the statute.

⁸⁶ Farmer, *supra* note 6, at 483.

⁸⁷ *Id.* at 484.

⁸⁸ Fryde, *supra* note 5, at 755–59.

on abandoned resources gradually faded from memory while claims on resources in continuing use were defended.

But one of the important lessons of economics points to the danger of neglecting the innovative compensations that people make in response to changes in economic magnitudes. To begin with a modern example, it would be disruptive if the United States awakened to discover an unexpected quadrupling of gasoline prices. A breathless media would see disaster looming, imagining that people would be unable even to travel to work or to the store. Any substantial vacation plans would seem doomed. But in fact the impact would lessen quickly as people dusted off bikes, hiking shoes, and bus schedules even as they increased the multitasking of automotive trips. As the existing stock of cars gradually depreciated, smaller automobiles would replace larger ones. Who knows what sorts of completely unforeseen innovations would be induced over time? In other words, people in the United States would begin to behave like Europeans, where gasoline is already four times as expensive as it is in the United States. Europeans regularly go shopping and to work (in trains and small cars and on bikes) and take vacation trips like clockwork.

In brief, fixed-proportions models omit (among other things) potential compensating changes in productive techniques. To return the discussion to the plague years, a few obvious compensations to adjust for the disappearance of so many workers would quickly have occurred to survivors. For example, those idled draft animals lucky enough to escape the table would quickly have been joined into enlarged teams, thus enabling a peasant to plow and haul more rapidly than before. Although previously a rare privilege rather than the norm, such large teams would have required no unknown technique. More subtle innovations would have continued for a substantial period, because idle resources provide a powerful spark to innovation.⁹

Even the haphazard medieval data that survive easily reject the fixed-proportions hypothesis, as will be shown below. Survivors soon began using human and nonhuman factors in unprecedented ratios, which resulted in a per capita real income spike unmatched again until the early modern period (although aggregate income fell for decades because of the radical population decline). Not everyone shared the bounty. The nobility, who had relied on the returns from land and capital to support elegance, promptly found it impossible to maintain their accustomed lifestyles. Any noble house in serious debt when the Black Death struck faced ruin.

B. *The Standard Variable-Proportions Model*

That record would surprise few economists, most of whom would expect that hardly any resources would have been abandoned. The marginal products

⁹ Joel Mokyr, *The Lever of Riches* 273–78 (1990).

That the fines were not prohibitory is evidenced by the appearance of a new profession—agents began to appear who would match labor-short lords with serfs willing to risk the fine that came with the new employment.

At the Suffolk sessions of June 1361, a man described as a weaver was accused of being a “common procurator of agricultural *famuli* for taking them outside their vill in the autumn.” At the Norfolk manor of Fornsett, belonging to the countess of Norfolk, a man was indicted for leading each autumn six or eight others outside the manor to work at higher wages. [T]he countess . . . had largely lost control over her servile tenantry of disgruntled smallholders. . . . At the bishop of Worcester’s manor of Bibury, in south-eastern Gloucestershire, on a single day . . . the reeve brought from outside as many as 127 men, hired at the illegal wage of 5d. a day, to gather and bind the lord’s [grain], in addition to employing all the bishop’s tenants from Bibury.⁸⁹

By 1361 the plague had reemerged in rural England. “Again manors had to bid against each other to attract workers. . . . Parliament now compelled the justices to hold their sessions more frequently, and the crown authorized them to enforce the old labour laws. . . . In general the justices’ efforts to control wages in the 1360s and later seem to have been less successful than in the 1350s. . . . By the early fifteenth century . . . most workers were getting at least 50 percent more than the payments stipulated in 1351, and in most cases their wages continued to rise thereafter.”⁹⁰

Manorial lords tried to retain control over workers by using their own auditing systems and courts, but “neither statutes nor auditors could isolate manorial wage bills from the general economic pressures of the time.”⁹¹

Eventually the lords’ attempts to use the legal system to cartelize conditions of servitude generated revolt among the peasants, most famously Wat Tyler’s Rebellion. In 1381, a third of a century after the initial onslaught of the Black Death and on the heels of the third major plague epidemic, mobs began destroying the property and even the lives of their overlords, government officials, and lawyers. By mid-June, Wat Tyler, a charismatic blacksmith, and Jack Straw, a peasant who had risen to leadership of a similar revolt on the opposite bank of the Thames, assembled an estimated 100,000 peasants and led them in a march on London. Although a new tax seems to have provided the immediate focal point around which disgruntled peasants rallied, the anonymous author of the contemporaneous *Anonimale Chronicle* asserted that “the supreme and overriding purpose of the revolt was the abolition of villeinage and all that went with it.”⁹² The 14-year-old King Richard II, deserted by frightened advisors and troops, agreed to their demands for an end to serfdom and a reduction in customary land rent. The rebels’ success

⁸⁹ *Id.* at 758–59.

⁹⁰ Farmer, *supra* note 6, at 485–86.

⁹¹ *Id.* at 489.

⁹² Quoted in Fryde, *supra* note 5, at 760.

was ephemeral. They were repelled as troops finally rallied to Richard. Tyler was killed, and the king's promises were put aside.

Perhaps one would doubt that poorly organized peasants, mainly on foot and armed with farm implements, could have fared even that well against an organized, mounted, and well-armed opponent. But they had, and the serfs' close approach to freedom in 1381 inspired five more revolts before 1405,⁹³ which reflected the growing stress within the feudalism system. On Merton College's Kibworth Harcourt manor, "the full effect of the late fourteenth-century plagues were . . . felt [by] the 1420s. [S]uccessive high mortalities so eroded the traditional stability of the population that [the manor] was reluctantly compelled to concede not only a drop in rents but also the abandonment of labour services and bond tenure."⁹⁴

In other English locales, serfdom disintegrated more gradually.⁹⁵ "In the course of roughly a century after 1381 the servile peasantry, by persistent nibbling at the whole structure of servile exactions, greatly reduced its profitability to the lords until the point was reached when it became wiser not to mention serfdom at all."⁹⁶ By the time Columbus crossed the Atlantic, English serfdom had for all practical purposes been consigned to history. But the process of reconfiguring property rights to labor in response to strongly altered factor price ratios had been long and bloody.

VI. CONCLUSION

Fascination with such ancient and horrific epidemics may seem morbid to those of limited historical literacy, but the Black Death truly was one of the momentous episodes not only of European but of world history. The pestilence initiated a sea change in factor proportions. Although there was substantial geographical variability, the ratio of land to human factors, both labor and human capital, increased quickly and dramatically and then remained at elevated levels for centuries as a result of recurring epidemics. Over an extended period, per capita income remained at unprecedented levels, inducing an increased rate of capital accumulation as evidenced by a long-term slide in real interest rates.⁹⁷ Thus, by the time initial land-labor

⁹³ *Id.* at 797.

⁹⁴ Howell, *supra* note 62, at 57.

⁹⁵ Serfdom eroded even more gradually in some other parts of Europe, with Russia, the last holdout, abolishing the institution only in 1863.

⁹⁶ Fryde, *supra* note 5, at 768.

⁹⁷ It is difficult to determine interest rates directly from the time of the Black Death, but in Corn at Interest: The Extent and Cost of Grain Storage in Medieval England, 74 *Am. Econ. Rev.* 174 (1984), D. N. McCloskey and John Nash compiled a range of estimates by (for example) observing commodity price increases from the end of one year's harvest to the beginning of the next. Their estimate bounds on real interest rates from the 1300s range from above 20 to more than 50 percent, with something over 30 percent seeming most likely. By the 1700s, real interest rates had fallen dramatically to near modern levels.

ratios had been restored after the Black Death, the capital-labor and human capital-labor ratios had drifted even further from their original levels, with the compounded investment in new techniques being an important component.⁹⁸ In brief, factors have never regained pre-Black Death proportions. If we are lucky they never will.

Relying on the theoretical foundation of property rights economics, this article deduced a number of theoretical implications concerning the evolution of medieval property rights following the Black Death and reported some tentative findings drawn from the secondary literature. Property rights economics purports that forming and holding economic rights is costly and thus will become more prevalent as the benefits of holding rights grow relative to those costs and vice versa. Changes in the benefits and the costs usually come slowly, however, and are thus frequently dominated by an aggregation of changes in a multitude of other economic features great and small and in that way become difficult to separate from statistical noise.

But in the middle of the fourteenth century, the abruptly changed benefits and costs became by far the paramount statistical event of the age. The benefits and costs of property rights changed so rapidly, in fact, that contemporaries were initially at a loss to discern a proper reaction. Human resources had increased greatly in value relative to other factors of production and eventually came to be protected much more assiduously against dissipation of their rent. That resulted in a severe weakening of serfdom and related feudal institutions, institutions that in effect treated human factors more as communal property than as private property.

In stark contrast, nonhuman resources, especially land and structures, became less valuable and were tended less assiduously, and in a great many instances enforcement of title was abandoned altogether. The lord of the manor might continue to claim (although not always to enforce) title, but many peasants who had been the proximate users of the resources abandoned their subordinate claims utterly, even when that required leaving their home villages altogether in order to escape the beleaguered lord's wrath. That is to say, many nonhuman entitlements were returned to open access. In some instances, however, those newly open-access resources must have had positive marginal products because they remained in use, an observation that was predicted by the property rights models but not by either of its competitors.

The empirical story here, relying as it does on unsystematic perusal of the secondary literature, is merely a suggestive challenge and can by no means

⁹⁸ Because of its chronic nature, the Black Death thus differed markedly from, for instance, the 1918–19 influenza epidemic. Although the flu epidemic was a massive killer of people worldwide, thus markedly altering factor ratios and per capita income, the disease has not recurred subsequently on a similar scale. After a time, the growth path of the U.S. economy seems to have returned to its pre-flu time path. See Elizabeth Brainerd & Mark V. Siegler, *The Economic Effects of the 1918 Influenza Epidemic* (paper presented at the Northwestern University Economic History Seminar, September 2002).

be taken as conclusive. Researchers who were not in command of the property rights model collected empirics relevant to that model only by happenstance, which in this instance was rare. To investigate primary sources will take time insofar as fourteenth-century data are catalogued haphazardly, often have been permitted to deteriorate, and in many instances are inventoried in inconvenient locations. The entries are sometimes in difficult language for a modern researcher. At best, one hopes for a literate Latin or the Middle English of Chaucer's day. When forming a baseline from earlier English records, regional Anglo-Saxon dialects and bastardized Saxon-Norman French may have to be mastered. In many parts of today's France, now-extinct provincial tongues would have been in use. The advantages of a well-focused investigation of primary sources are manifest, however. Among other things, such data might permit a test of implications (unreported here) that derive from a model that simultaneously treats governance and exclusion as complementary ways of controlling dissipation within communal property.

While awaiting more compelling tests of the hypothesis, a property rights perspective on the Black Death serves as a convenient focusing mechanism by which various historical occurrences can be more easily examined and remembered. The authors have found that focus to be a useful one.

of those nonhuman factors that were complementary to labor or human capital must have fallen in response to the sharp reduction in human factors, but why expect their owners to stop enforcing claims so long as the (net) marginal products remained positive? It would seem under that view that a positive marginal product must have disappeared wherever the documentary record reveals a failure to enforce prior claims. But then unenforced title must have meant that not just the claim but also the very utilization of the resource would have terminated.

This alternative to fixed proportions would thus foresee substantial change in the proportions with which factors were used, but little abandonment. A typical survivor would be expected to have acquired nearly half again as much land, draft power, capital, and so on. The means of producing a given product would have less intensively used the now more costly labor and human capital, substituting cheapened land, physical capital, and animal power instead.

Simultaneously, the product mix would have shifted toward less human-intensive products. To illustrate, following the epidemic both gardening and animal husbandry would have substituted land for labor, a prediction borne out by the widespread contemporary observation that fields and pastures became untidy after the pandemic, with weeds, sparse crops, and stray animals tolerated to an unprecedented degree while any crop that performed too poorly was simply neglected until it spoiled in the field: "[N]ow the fields begin to have a ragged appearance; crows, with no boy to scare them away, cry loudly over the meager grain in a sown arable strip while next to it weeds grow on other strips belonging to farmers who have reduced their own sown acreage, divisions between them becoming obliterated."¹⁰

But there would also have been a substitution of the less labor-intensive animal husbandry for the more labor-intensive gardening.¹¹ The reduced value of the land input would have decreased the cost of pastoral production, and that in turn would have resulted in a decline in the price of animal products relative to other foodstuffs. Thus, while higher per capita incomes would have led to larger peasant meals generally (with a salutary impact on prior nutrition standards), a disproportionate part of that bounty would have come as meat and cheese rather than vegetables, the production of each consuming

¹⁰ Harold Fox, *The Wolds before c. 1500*, in *The English Rural Landscape* 50, 60 (Joan Thirsk ed. 2000).

¹¹ B. H. Slicher van Bath, *The Agrarian History of Western Europe, A.D. 500–1850*, at 142 (1963). If "labor works in conjunction with an abundance of complementary resources . . . the people are rich, although in consequence the productivity of the [other factors] is poor . . . [With reversed factor ratios the other factors are] rich because so much labor can be applied to each unit, but in consequence the people are poor." David D. Haddock, *Force, Threat, Negotiation: The Private Enforcement of Rights*, in *Property Rights: Contract, Conflict, and Law* 168, 192–93 (Terry L. Anderson & Fred S. McChesney eds. 2003).

less labor but more land. Similarly, terms of trade moved against land-intensive agriculture and in favor of labor-intensive manufactures.¹²

Variable proportions gives a much more satisfactory account of the historical record than does fixed proportions, but three puzzles remain. First—perhaps merely an untestable impression—the abandonment of effective resource claims seems to have been rather substantial, substantial enough to evoke widespread dismay in contemporary accounts. Second—a more telling difficulty—some of those resources nonetheless remained in use, although usually less intensively. Thus, net marginal products must sometimes have remained positive although effective enforcement of title ceased. Third—an error of omission—standard variable proportions (in company with fixed proportions) makes no prediction that particular resource entitlements will change hands, such as the decay of serfdom through which a great deal of human resource ownership was transferred from master to serf.

C. *The Property Rights Model*

Those puzzles arise not because economists use the variable-proportions model—indeed a powerful theoretical tool—but because the standard variant omits any coherent theory of property rights. In truth, the property rights model is not so much a competitor of the variable-proportions model as an extension. Standard economics takes initial resource ownership as given, a matter that seems mysteriously to have been solved before the model's analysis even began, and implicitly assumes that maintaining ownership is costless. In contrast, property rights economists begin analysis at an earlier point, asking how (and even if) ownership of a particular resource comes into being and analogously whether and when it will be abandoned.¹³ Excluding some people from a resource and governing the limits under which others may employ it are costly, although if no uses are barred, exploitation is apt to be too intensive and too early while simultaneously the resource's maintenance and enhancement are neglected. Claiming and enforcing title is indeed a powerful mechanism for reducing gross dissipation of rent, but it is net dissipation that is at issue. The gross dissipation avoided by establishing and maintaining resource title must exceed the consequent cost, or rational actors would not assert claims strong enough to exclude other users or uses.¹⁴

This cost of defining and maintaining property rights leads to situations in which a number of people who do not bother with formal claims simultaneously use some resource because the marginal product, although positive,

¹² Douglass Cecil North & Robert Paul Thomas, *The Rise of the Western World* 75 (1973).

¹³ The seminal works are by Alchian and by Demsetz, *supra* note 7.

¹⁴ For example, see Steven N. S. Cheung, *The Structure of a Contract and the Theory of a Non-exclusive Resource*, 13 *J. Law & Econ.* 49 (1970).

is inadequate to justify title formation and enforcement.¹⁵ There will be some dissipation, but it would be wasteful to avoid it. The efficient level of dissipation will be trivial if the cost of controlling it is minor, but substantial if control cost is high. It follows that changes in either the physical dissipation of a resource's marginal product or of its market value will predictably alter property rights, as will changes in the technology of property control or the cost of the inputs required to employ it. As Demsetz noted, resource ownership is not a given and it certainly is not costless.¹⁶ Thus, unlike either of its competitors, the variable-proportions variant that incorporates property rights insights—the property rights model—is consistent with some post-Black Death failure to enforce title even though the resource remained in use. Such abandonment of exclusive claims would have occurred where the marginal product was positive but too low to justify defending title.

Again, in distinction to its competitors, the property rights model also predicts that the Black Death would have put substantial stress on feudal institutions, notably serfdom. To see why, note that few medieval workers owned a really substantial share of their own labor.¹⁷ Instead, most were bound to some petty lord through one of several distinct degrees of serfdom, with the serf and the lord holding some traditional division of rights to the serf's labor. Except for that minority of serfs directly in bondage to the king, the lord in turn would have had feudal obligations to an overlord, who could within traditional limits claim resources from those directly beneath him in the hierarchy.¹⁸ Thus the overlord had a limited if indirect claim on the lord's limited claim over a serf's labor. That overlord (unless he were king) would have had an even more exalted superior with analogous rights, and so on. Feudal relations thus resulted in a chain of increasingly indirect claims on serf labor beginning with the serf and ending with the king. That claim dispersal meant each semi-owner (including the serf) had an incentive to use an individual right in ways that diminished the long-run value aggregated over all the rights holders.

Consider choices regarding risk. During any claiming period, a decision maker might have used a serf in ways (such as collecting bird eggs from cliff-side nests) that as a statistical expectation advantaged the decision maker while injuring the aggregated group of claimants. The entire payoff if the activity was successful (namely, the serf did not fall but brought back eggs)

¹⁵ Lee J. Alston, Gary D. Libecap, & Bernardo Mueller, *Titles, Conflict, and Land Use: The Development of Property Rights and Land Reform on the Brazilian Amazon Frontier* (1999).

¹⁶ Demsetz, *supra* note 7.

¹⁷ Indeed, even today one possesses incomplete title. If it can tax, a government asserts some claim over the returns to all factors, including the human. It is a matter of degree.

¹⁸ We adopt the masculine pronoun here because lords and their overlords all the way to the sovereign were predominantly, although not quite exclusively, male. A similar tendency was clearly absent in the instance of serfs, where the populations divided by gender would have been roughly equal.

would have accrued to the decision maker, whereas the cost of a mishap would have been shared (all claimants would have lost an anticipated portion of an injured or killed serf's labor). The wholly private marginal benefit would have been brought into equality with marginal private cost, thus omitting the marginal external cost to others who shared claims on the serf's labor. Too much risk would consequently have been undertaken.¹⁹

Importantly, the value of that dissipation would have been less when labor's marginal product was low, and then it would not have warranted as substantial an avoidance cost. But as post-Black Death labor scarcity increased the marginal product of human factors, bearing additional costs to reduce the dissipation of labor rents would have become increasingly attractive. How might that be done? To answer, it is informative to consider first a nonhuman factor, then to observe the modifications that become apparent if the factor's nature is altered.

Imagine that parties A, B, C, . . . , N shared ownership of some tool, perhaps a plow. That ownership structure would lead to some dissipation of the physical marginal product of the plow—in order to cover more ground while in possession a co-owner might use the tool roughly, too little postuse cleaning might encourage rust, and so on. If an hour's worth of plow time becomes more valuable, such dissipation will become more important to the owners. Marginal dissipation that had been tolerable owing to its low value relative to control cost would perhaps become wasteful after the value of the marginal product increased. Internalizing more externalities can reduce that dissipation (the benefit), and one way to internalize externalities is to consolidate ownership, although that will increase spot transactions or other adjustments (the cost) necessary to control the plow's idleness. But if ownership is consolidated, it is hardly obvious whether it will consolidate in the hands of A or B or C or . . . N. There is inadequate information in the hypothetical to resolve that issue.

If we substitute a serf for a plow, however, the likely consolidation becomes clearer. By the nature of the resource, it is difficult to divorce human productive factors from the willful humans who embody them. A plow has no preferences regarding its own use patterns, nor can it monitor itself, but human factors do have such preferences, and they can monitor their own behavior. Humans shirk, they sneak, they secretly divert toward themselves returns that rightly belong to another. Linguistic study shows that the modern term villain derives directly from a Middle English term meaning serf—villein—but the stolid plow never behaves in villainous ways.

Monitoring a worker is often less costly for the worker—who in any event

¹⁹ Since the number of distinct claimants would have been fewer and thus the externality less pervasive, an implication (untested here) is that there would have been less dissipation of labor value for serfs directly in bondage to a king than for those in bondage to a baron, and so on, down to a serf in bondage to the most petty lord.

must attend to the task—than for another claimant, whose only motivation for being present is to monitor the worker.²⁰ More subtly, the worker is able to gauge the subjective costs and benefits of exerting alternative levels of effort, often a main part of the equation. Even a monitor who could perfectly observe the objective characteristics of what a worker is doing would have a harder time optimizing the effort than would the worker, because the subjective costs and benefits to the worker would be unobservable by the monitor. Consequently, as the value of human factors increases, the dissipation arising from external control of the worker increases and, *ceteris paribus*, the advantage of consolidating ownership in the worker's hands grows.²¹

Although lords retained some claim over a serf's labor, converting in-kind obligations into monetary ones—taxes—increased the worker's residual claim on labor value and therefore the incentive to maximize it. That conversion was slowed as it awaited reasonably thoroughgoing markets where the monetary claims could be smoothly substituted for in-kind exactions.²² Although each of those changes had begun prior to the Black Death (possibly owing to unrelated famines earlier in the fourteenth century), they greatly accelerated afterward.

Although there was legislative resistance to increasing serfs' claims on their own labor, manifested for instance in the Statute of Labourers, the dispersed claims gradually concentrated in the workers' hands as labor became increasingly scarce. To be sure, the flow of a free worker's labor was sold when the worker hired out. But once the chains of serfdom were released, the worker could refuse any offer that would reduce labor value, just as an employer would refuse to tender an offer if the worker could not be adequately monitored.

In contrast to human factors, as the relative value of nonhuman factors decreased, it became less attractive to avoid dissipating them. Put more intuitively, as factors like land became less valuable, it became more attractive to reduce the cost of closely patrolling the borders along with similar property defenses. Decision makers balanced dissipation of one productive resource against the opportunity cost of factors consumed to protect it. One would predict equality at the margin, meaning that neither form of dissipation would be eradicated, but instead the aggregate magnitude of the two would be minimized.

The property rights model would thus argue for post-Black Death evolution of more strongly protected connections between decision maker and

²⁰ Yoram Barzel, *The Entrepreneur's Reward for Self-Policing*, 25 *Econ. Inquiry* 103 (1987).

²¹ Yoram Barzel, *An Economic Analysis of Slavery*, 20 *J. Law & Econ.* 87 (1977).

²² North & Thomas, *supra* note 12. Government exactions imposed on income earned from time spent at labor create well-known distortions, but, holding constant the benefits accruing to the government, the level of distortion arising from government exactions of the time itself would be greater because the government would make poorer choices regarding the alternatives the worker would have to sacrifice.

Plane is struck by lightning during heavy rain at airport in China

09:52 EST, 30 May 2016 |

dailymail.co.uk

Daily Mail

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Caught on camera: Huge bolt of lightning strikes plane during wild storm at China airport

- The plane was parked at Jieyang Chaoshan International Airport in China
- CCTV footage shows a bolt of lightning

hitting the plane during a storm

- There were no passengers or crew members on the plane

By Ekin Karasin For Mailonline

This is the spine-tingling moment a plane gets hit by lightning at an airport in China.

Footage shows the airliner light up as it is struck at Jieyang Chaoshan International Airport during a wild storm on Monday.

The bolt of lightning makes the plane, which was parked at the airport, and the wheels flash a vivid purple.



The plane was struck by the bolt of lightning at Jieyang Chaoshan International Airport in China

The bolt of lightning makes the plane, which was parked at the airport, flash a vivid purple

The six-second clip appears to have been taken from CCTV footage.

Southern Airlines authorities told CCTVNEWS that the plane was hit as it was preparing for an overhaul at the airport. There were no passengers or crew members on the plane.

It comes as American Airlines passengers were left shaken after their plane was struck by lightning in March and forced to make an emergency landing.

The Embraer 175 sustained apparent scorch marks on its tail wing when it flew through stormy weather on a 90-minute flight from Raleigh-Durham airport in North Carolina to New



York.

The plane was preparing for an overhaul at the airport amid heavy rain

There were no passengers or crew on the plane

Passengers described a terrifying scene as they witnessed a flash of light and heard what sounded like a massive explosion.

After the plane landed safely, passenger Diante Edwards told ABC 7: 'It was pretty terrifying, I'm not going to lie.'

Another passenger, Lou Luca, said the plane dipped and he felt like he was on a roller coaster, adding: 'I thought we got hit by a missile. Soiled my pants a little bit, it was bad.'

In an interview with CBS New York, an unidentified passenger said: 'There was a flash of light right outside the first row window on the left hand side of the plane and then a tremendous bang. It just lit up blue inside the plane.'

It comes as American Airlines passengers were left shaken after their plane to New York was struck by lightning in March and forced to make an emergency landing. Experts said an aircraft's metal body acts as a conductor, allowing the strike's electricity to pass through it (pictured)



Passengers described a terrifying scene as they witnessed a flash of light and heard what sounded like a massive explosion. Passenger Rebecca Seger snapped this photo of the plane being met by firefighters after it landed

Comments (3)

Miss Skiffins, Little London, Equatorial Guinea, about 13 hours ago

Farady Cage

Never You Mind, Clydebank, United Kingdom, about 12 hours ago

Nicholas Cage

appleforaface, Anytown, United States, about 10 hours ago

La cage aux folles.

Published by Associated Newspapers Ltd



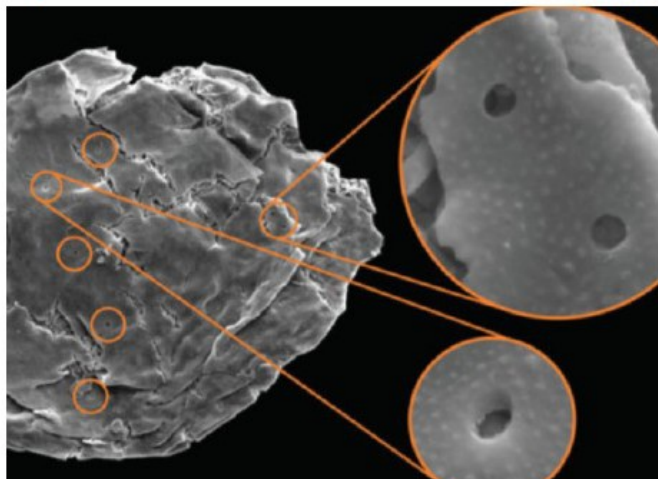
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Science and Health
Science. Not Hype.



The marks of a microscopic vampire. (Credit: SM Porter, *Proc R Soc B*. DOI: 10.1098/rspb.2016.0221)

Posted on May 30, 2016 by Alex Berezow

Ever since the first cells evolved about 3.8 billion years ago, they have had to contend with other life forms intent on killing them. Today, wherever cells exist, viruses exist. It is likely this relationship goes back to time immemorial.

Viruses weren't the only threat to other life forms on the early Earth. The very first predators were probably bacteria that preyed upon other bacteria (PDF). *Bdellovibrio*, for example, is a modern-day bacterium that invades other bacteria and eats them from the inside. ("Bdello" is derived from the Greek word for "leech" and "vibrio" describes its curved shape.)

Eventually, more complex cells called eukaryotes — the same type of cells of which plants, animals, fungi, and protists are made — evolved, and they, too, fed upon bacteria.

And, as you might expect, the hunter also became the hunted. Eukaryotes that devoured other eukaryotes evolved at some point, but the exact timing is not known.

To clarify this issue, Susannah Porter of the University of California-Santa Barbara examined evidence of "vampire-like" behavior in 740-780-million-year-old fossils of protists (single-celled eukaryotes) found in the Grand Canyon. Her findings were published in *Proceedings of the Royal Society B*.

Some protists produce walls, and after the protists die, the walls can become fossilized. (The walls, also called "tests," can be quite beautiful.) Curiously, Dr. Porter noticed that the fossils she examined contained strange micrometer-sized holes. (See photo above.)

After ruling out other potential explanations (e.g., specialized cell wall pores, mineral perforation, and degradation), she concluded that the holes are best explained as drill holes created by predatory protists seeking to slurp out whatever was inside the shell. Similar to *Bdellovibrio*, some of these protists physically crawl inside the shell and eat the protist from within. Vampyrellidae, a modern-day family of protists, behaves in just this manner.

The natural history of our planet, therefore, shows that microorganisms were vampires long before *Twilight* made it cool to be a vampire.

Source: Porter SM. "Tiny vampires in ancient seas: evidence for predation via perforation in

fossils from the 780–740 million-year-old Chuar Group, Grand Canyon, USA.” *Proc. R. Soc. B* **283**: 20160221. Published: 18-May-2016. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1098/rspb.2016.0221>

About Alex Berezow

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This entry was posted in Microbiology, News, News and Views and tagged eukaryotes, protists. Bookmark the permalink.

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Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles' lair listed on AirBNB

upi.com

By Daniel Uria | May 27, 2016 at 1:44 PM



Turtle Lair

New York, NY, United States

Hey dudes! Looking for a dojo where you can practice your ninjitsu skills? Our secret lair in Manhattan is THE place to order up a pie, shoot some hoops & chill with your squad. Don't sweat the 10 ...

NEW YORK, May 27 (UPI) -- An AirBNB listing is offering fans of the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles the opportunity to spend a night in the reptilian crime fighters' secret lair.

The listing posted by the group's very own Leonardo allows up to six guests to rent the Turtles' three bedroom lair in Manhattan for just \$10 a night.

"This high-tech dojo is fully loaded...a glow in the dark basketball court, a retro arcade, more video games with a pretty sweet tv wall...anything for hanging ninja-style," the listing states.

While guests will get the opportunity to take full advantage of the lair and possibly even grab a bite of pizza, the Turtles themselves will not be present on the property due to their commitment to protecting the city.

"Dude! I told ya we're out. Got evil to fight, battles to win. So we won't be there," the listing states.

The property was made available in honor of the upcoming film *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Out of the Shadows* and information about availability is shared on the film's official Twitter page, although all nights have presently been booked.

No drugs or alcohol are permitted on the property and renters are allowed to invite daytime guests, but pets are not allowed.

A donation will also be made to PACER's National Bullying Prevention Center for each guest that spends a night at the lair.

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The Tombstone That Stopped Me In My Tracks

stuffnobodycaresabout.com

The Heroic Edwin Gaddis Of New York



Edwin J Gaddis Greenwood Cemetery

When wandering through historic Green-Wood Cemetery in Brooklyn it's easy to be distracted by the grand mausoleums and elaborate memorials and pass by the more common looking tombstones.

I was struck by this simple memorial to Edwin John Gaddis who died July 23, 1883. His grave marker in section 91 of the cemetery reads as follows:

Edwin J. Gaddis,
Born October 23, 1861
Died July 23, 1883.
Drowned in Peconic Bay
Jamesport L. I.
While trying to save life
Greater love hath no man than this
That he lay down his life for his friends. John XV.13



Edwin Gaddis top tombstone Greenwood Cemetery 150811

On the top of the tombstone the following words are inscribed:

Your honor, your name,
And your praises shall ever remain.
Your fame shall be eternized.

Eternized, a word not used much today means, to make eternal; immortalize.

Who was Edwin Gaddis? What was his life like? What would make someone risk (and lose) their life? Who exactly were the people he *tried* to save and were they actually saved?

Besides what is etched on Gaddis' tombstone, there is virtually no information online about his life. There were however three news items online about his death. This most complete story that answers many of the questions I asked was reported by the *New York Tribune* on Wednesday, July 25, 1883:

LOSING HIS LIFE IN SAVING OTHERS: A SAD ACCIDENT AT JAMESPORT. L.I — E. J. GADDIS DROWNED.

News was received at this city yesterday morning of the death by drowning of Edwin John Gaddis of No. 177 East Seventieth st., a young man well known in military circles. His mother, who lives in Fourth st., Jersey City, was the first to hear of her son's death by a dispatch from her sister a resident of Jamesport, L. I.

where her son had gone last Saturday to remain until Monday. The telegram read: "While trying to save two ladies, Eddy was drowned. Searching for the body." About 9:30 a dispatch was received at No. 177 East Seventieth st., the house of George Hall, the uncle of young Gaddis, confirming the report of the fatal accident and stating that a thorough search was being instituted for the recovery of the body. Subsequently another dispatch announced that the body had been found. On the reception of the first dispatch, Gaddis's mother and grandfather, Mr. Haybeck, and his brother George went to Jamesport. Mr. and Mrs. George Hall returned to the city at a late hour last night, and the story of the sad accident is best described in Mr. Hall's words:

"A party of six, including myself, my wife and nephew, and two daughters of Mr. Hamilton, of Brooklyn, whom Eddy had escorted to Jamesport late Saturday at the request of their father, were bathing on Monday morning about 11 o'clock. The two ladies, whose names are Sarah and Ida Hamilton, waded out, out of their depth and called to me for help. I swam as rapidly as possible to them, and when I reached them they clutched hold of me and we all three sank. On coming up I contrived to shake Sarah from me at the same time calling to Eddy, who was standing in his bathing suit on the beach talking to my wife. He, seeing us struggling to the water and divining the cause of our shouts for help, without any hesitation rushed into the water to our assistance. When he reached me I had Ida safely above water. I pointed to Sarah, who was still struggling in her endeavor to keep herself above the surface. He swam directly to her, and when he reached her she clutched hold of him and they both went down. He never rose again. While all this was going on in the water, my wife, followed by some friends, was rushing wildly around shouting for some one to man the boats and come to our assistance. The boats finally put out and picked up Ida, Sarah and myself, almost insensible. The persons in the boat were entirely ignorant of Eddy's whereabouts, not knowing that he had attempted our rescue at all, and so no attempt was made to look for any one else. My wife stood on the shore and screamed that Eddy was out in the water somewhere, but they did not understand what she meant until they came to shore. When they did understand it was too late. The body was recovered at 7 o'clock this morning. Miss Sarah Hamilton is still delirious, but it is thought that she will ultimately recover. She is sixteen years of age. Her sister Ida is thirteen years old, and has fully recovered from the shock."

Young Gaddis's body will be taken directly to Green-wood Cemetery, where the funeral will take place today at noon. He was twenty-one years old, and was employed by T. B. Starr the jeweler of Fifth ave., as book-keeper. He was a corporal in the 71st Regiment and a member of the Central Congregational Church. He has a mother, a sister and two brothers.

The *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* of July 25 had some more information about the actual incident:

Where Heroism Led To Death

A New York Gentleman Loses his Life In An Effort To Save Two Ladies From

Drowning

A week ago Edward (sic) J. Gaddis, of New York, went to Jamesport, L. I., to spend his vacation. He was to have returned to the city yesterday, but his body was sent home this morning packed in ice. Mrs. Hamilton and her two daughters, of this city, were stopping in Jamesport for the summer. On Sunday the young ladies went bathing. They could not swim, and getting into deep water were in danger of being drowned. Mr. Gaddis heard their screams and hastened to their assistance. It was a life and death struggle. The young ladies were saved, but he was drowned. When he came within reach he was grasped tightly by both of them. Mr. Corwin and Mr. Young, both residents of Jamesport, pushed off in boats to rescue the party, but arrived too late to save Gaddis, who had disappeared by reason of extreme exhaustion. One of the young ladies had also gone to the bottom, but her body was raised with an oar, and in a brief time she was restored to consciousness. The body of Mr. Gaddis was recovered yesterday. Those who saw the struggle in the water praise his bravery. He was a bookkeeper in a large jewelry house in New York.

The *New York Times* of that same date contained an even shorter summary of the drowning with few additional details:

Drowned While Saving Others

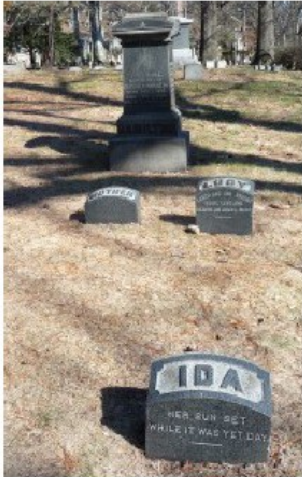
Edwin John Gaddis, aged 21 years, recently employed as a book-keeper in a jewelry store in Fifth-avenue, this City, was drowned at Jamesport, Long Island, on Monday. His widowed mother, Mrs. Caroline Gaddis who is now residing in Jersey City, was informed of her son's death by a brief telegram which stated that the young man was drowned while trying to save two young ladies of Brooklyn from a like fate. Young Gaddis went to Jamesport, which is on the north-west shore of Great Peconic Bay, on Saturday evening, and intended to return to his home on Monday. He was a Corporal of the Seventy-first Regiment, and had many friends in that organization. He was in the employ of Harper Brothers a few years ago. The time for the funeral has not yet been determined, but the interment will be in Green-Wood Cemetery.

That was it. Edwin Gaddis, a brave young man who forfeited his life in saving two acquaintances.

The father of the girls, Colson C. Hamilton, had his two daughters saved, but tragedy struck soon after.

Eldest daughter Lucy R. Hamilton died at the age of 19, according to the *Brooklyn Eagle* "after a long and painful illness," on April 10, 1884. Colson's wife Lucy died less than two months later on June 2, 1884 at the age of 39. Colson C. Hamilton was left a widower with four children to raise on his own Sarah, Ida, Alice and Colson Everett.

So what became of the rescued daughters Sarah and Ida? Did they live fruitful lives and have



Colson Hamilton family plot

offspring?

Unfortunately Ida Hamilton died at the age of 18, on February 7, 1889 only six years after being saved. Her gravestone says something eloquently simple that I've never seen before as an epitaph, "Her sun set while it was yet day."

Sarah Hamilton married Thomas Edwards on December 16, 1885. They had one child, Edward. Thomas Edwards died in 1906 and Sarah died on April 27, 1915 at the age of 48. It is unknown what became of their son Edward Edwards.

Coincidentally Ida and Sarah are buried in Green-Wood Cemetery in section 159, less than half a mile from their savior Edwin J. Gaddis.

Sarah's grave is unmarked as is her father Colson C. Hamilton who passed away in 1911.



Ida Hamilton grave Greenwood cemetery



Ida Hamilton gravestone Greenwood cemetery

Did the Hamilton family pass the story down to future generations? If their lineage has continued, do the Hamilton descendants know of the incident? I wonder.

I know people still do heroic things today, sometimes sacrificing their lives to save others. Maybe I'm wrong about this, it just seems there was a greater sense of civility, chivalry and sacrifice in the 19th century than there is today.

And what of Edwin J. Gaddis?

On the day I stood in front of Gaddis' memorial taking photographs, I paused and pondered about all of the things I have written here and more.

In our internet age where millions of words are written about shallow celebrities and trivial things, I was not surprised when I researched and found that there was almost no information about Edwin Gaddis.

Besides a findagrave.com entry and the contemporary news stories in the local newspapers, no one today would know of Edwin Gaddis and his ultimate sacrifice.

Despite the noble words on his tombstone, Gaddis' story has been forgotten. That is until now. For those of you who read this story, may Edwin Gaddis' fame "be eternized."

2 thoughts on "This Tombstone Stopped Me In My Tracks"

1. Sam Juliano May 18, 2016 at 5:01 am

I found your blog while looking for the "Whipped Cream" album history, and I find myself coming back to your blog to read your interesting stories. Having read several now, over several days, it's time to say thanks. I appreciate your style and subjects, and I'll keep coming back for more. Thank you!

1. B.P. Post author May 18, 2016 at 10:53 am

Thank you for taking the time to write. Your comment is much appreciated.

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Top 10 Tasmanian ghost towns

australiangeographic.com.au

Australian GEOGRAPHIC

Australian Geographic

The Royal Hotel in Linda closed in the 1950s. *Image Credit: Scott Davis / Wikimedia*

- BY Amelia Caddy |
- May 24, 2016

Shrouded in forests and steeped in history, Tasmania is home to dozens of abandoned settlements.



DOTTED ACROSS OUR southernmost state are the ruins and relics of lost towns and communities. Barely noticeable today, some are victims of boom-and-bust mining days, when town fortunes rested on the mines they served, or the infrastructure they were charged with maintaining. Michael Holmes, author of *Vanishing Towns: Tasmania's Ghost Towns and Settlements*, has documented the stories of many of these long-

forgotten places.

Some of the towns have totally disappeared, but dozens linger on in the form of dilapidated houses, crumbling ruins, or tell-tale bursts of colour indicating where cottage gardens once grew. Here are some of Tasmania's long-gone places, and the tales behind their demise.

1. Poimena

Tasmania's vast Blue Tier Plateau, in the state's north-east, once held several bustling towns including Poimena. Tin miners began moving to Poimena in about the late 1870s, and by the 1880s it had a school, shops and a prominent hotel. Among the residents were Chinese tin miners, almost a thousand of whom lived and worked in the region at the time. Today, an open field lies where their houses once stood, but you can still see the foxgloves planted by Chinese miners more than a century ago, and signs point to where the town's main landmarks were located.

2. Mathinna

As the 1890s gold rush to Tasmania's north-east gained momentum, Mathinna grew to be one of the island's largest towns. Among the prospectors was farmer William James Mullins. On 20 June 1913 Mullins left home to check possum traps and never returned. His remains were discovered in a wooden funeral pyre two weeks later, but his killer was never found and his death remains a mystery. Rocked by the murder and with the gold rush over, Mathinna began to empty. Today, only about 200 people remain.

3. Waddamana

Waddamana is an Aboriginal word meaning 'noisy water', which is appropriate because it was the site of Hydro Tasmania's first power station. In the centre of Tasmania, Waddamana was born

sometime in about 1910 when workers began harnessing the waters of the Great Lake and Shannon River to provide power to Hobart. The last of the power stations was decommissioned in 1994 and they have since become museums. In Waddamana village, some of the original cottages can still be seen standing next to empty blocks of land, where daffodil-lined paths lead to long-gone front doorsteps.

4. Adamsfield

This remote town owes its existence to 'black gold' or osmiridium, discovered in 1925. At the time, the natural alloy was seven times as valuable as gold. Hundreds of miners were drawn here, but life was tough – just reaching the town required a steep 35km trek. Most lived in tents, and lived on damper, tea, bacon and tinned meat. Today, it can be reached by a two-hour walk from Clear Hill Road in the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area or with a 4WD vehicle and a permit.

5. Pillinger



East Pillinger

A railway bridge leading to East Pillinger. (Image: Joanne Powell / Wikimedia)

Within the World Heritage Area lies the deserted town of Pillinger, once a bustling port, but now reclaimed by the forest. When the North Mount Lyell Company, formed by James Crotty, constructed a railway here, the population soared. Three wharves, a saw mill, brickworks and a shipping terminus kept residents busy, but when Crotty passed away Pillinger faded from existence. Visitors can still reach ruins at East Pillinger by a four-hour return walk along the railway and river, which starts at Kelly Basin Road, south of Lynchford.

6. Linda

A short walk from Gormanston (see below) is the abandoned community of Linda, where the skeleton of the Royal Hotel still stands. Linda supported the North Mount Lyell Mine, now redundant, and was the terminus for the company's railway line to Pillinger. It had a reputation as a rough-and-tumble town and was the site of a brawl between Italian immigrants and locals, known as 'Britishers', which saw one man fatally stabbed.

7. Gormanston

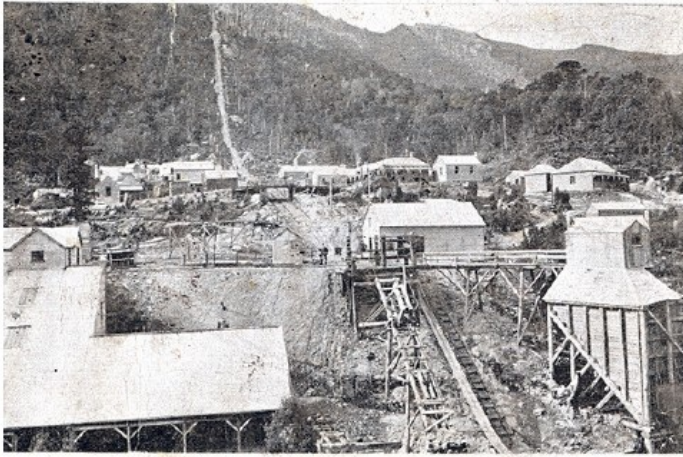
In October 1912 the thriving town of Gormanston in western Tasmania was struck by one of Australia's worst mining disasters. A fire in the Mount Lyell copper mine killed 42 men and 100 more were trapped until it was extinguished. The town that was once home to 2000 people started to decline. In 1951 cyclone-force winds destroyed the school, the fire station and many homes. In 2013 Gormanston was home to just six people.

8. Lake Margaret

Lake Margaret's last resident, Tim Adams, left in 2009, having lived alone for 18 years maintaining the old King Billy-pine pipeline for Hydro Tasmania. Receiving the highest annual rainfall of any Tasmanian town, Lake Margaret was established when the Mount Lyell Mining and Railway company constructed a hydro-electric scheme to power copper smelters in nearby Queenstown. The pipeline was closed in 2009, and forest now encroaches on the village lawns. You can visit the power station, which is now a museum.

9. Williamsford

Postcard of Williamsford and the Hercules Haulage Line reproduced by Greg Dickens, 2006, Centre for



Williamsford and the Hercules Haulage Line, Tasmania.
Williamsford

Tasmanian Historical Studies (Source: Wikimedia)

Williamsford's defining feature was the 500m-high Hercules haulage system that stretched more than 1.5km from the town up to the mine on the slopes of Mt Read. A town of 100, it was regarded as charming for its rugged and wild scenery, but isolated. The Hercules Mine closed in 1986 and the area has been deserted since then, but the ruins of the haulage system remain.

10. Dundas

From 1891 to 1901 Dundas went from a town of 1000 to 300. By 1895 the Zeehan and

Dundas Herald was already reporting on the "deserted township". The fall of the Tasmanian Smelting Company signalled the end for local mines, leaving many unemployed. The town continued to wax and wane over ensuing decades, with the rise and fall of mines. Today, a productive crocoite mine can be found here, which harvests the reddish crystal that is Tasmania's mineral emblem.

This article originally appeared in the Mar-Apr 2016 issue of Australian Geographic (AG#131).

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The horror of Chairman Mao's Cultural Revolution 50 years on

21:51, 20 May 2016 Updated 21:51, 20 May 2016 By Rod McPhee

mirror.co.uk



Getty

Chairman Mao Tse-Tung

The first time she saw a human brain she thought it looked like a pancake as it spilled from a broken skull amid the barbarism of China's Cultural Revolution.

Still a young child, Xue Xinran stood just inches from the body as it landed.

It belonged to a professor who leapt to his death, broken by the brutal regime of persecution that gripped the country

from May 1966 under Chairman Mao Tse-tung.

It is hard to believe that what is now the world's largest economy was 50 years ago plunged into a hell of murder, rape and torture, where millions were killed – some even eaten in a monstrous cannibalistic drive to purge any trace of the bourgeoisie.

Family members denounced one another as traitors and children were recruited to the Red Guard militia to help do Mao's dirty work.



Getty Handout Getty

Xue Xinran's family in China

At one school in Wuxan, in the south of the country, students beat to death - geography teacher Wu Shufang then forced another teacher to rip out his heart and liver, which the pupils barbecued and ate.

Xue's earliest memory is seeing one gang of savage youngsters burn down her family home near Beijing.

"They were just teenagers," she says.

"They were running in and out throwing things on the fire, I can still remember seeing all my dolls and toys in the flames.

"I remember them burning our furniture, books, and the radio. To them they were all 'foreign' influences.

"Our furniture was from the UK because my grandfather worked for the British General

Electric Company.

"Many of the books were also in English and people thought having a radio meant you were a spy.

"They told me my parents were bad people and my grandfather, who liked red wine, drank blood."

The hysterical crowd then turned their attention to little Xue herself.



Getty Handout Getty

Xinran Xue as a child

"I remember a woman coming up to me with a large pair of scissors," she says. "She lifted up my long hair, which went down to my shoulder, then just cut it off. Women weren't meant to have long hair, high heels or make up. They said it was capitalist."

After this her family lived in a building with three other professors and their families. The first to commit suicide was the academic who landed at Xue's feet

from a second-floor window. Within a month the two others had also killed themselves.

Xue's parents and grandfather were jailed as "traitors". Her parents have never talked about their experience in prison, but her grandfather, who also survived jail, provided some insight.

"He said many people died because they put human waste in the food," she says. "Many refused to eat, but my grandfather was strong. One boy in the Red Guard stood in front of him and peed into his soup. My grandfather still ate that soup."

With her family locked up she became a "political orphan" and, at the age of seven, was sent to a school on a military base for 10 years with other children of traitors. They were regularly subjected to beatings.

"There were 14 of us in a house, and we were guarded by Red Guards," she says.

"Nobody would play with us or dare talk to us, as we walked to school people would spit on us, one boy even urinated on me."

Children were recruited to Mao's murderous regime

Aged eight she attempted suicide for the first time, cutting her wrists. She tried again aged 11, drinking poison, but she was rushed to hospital and saved.

She went on to make two further attempts to end her life, driven to despair by horrors that no



Getty

little girl should have to witness – and which still haunt her now.

“The Cultural Revolution destroyed my childhood,” she says. “Even now I wake up in the night terrified, having nightmares about what happened.

“It will be the same for the millions who suffered in the Cultural Revolution.”

Xue is now 57 and a writer living in London with a bestselling book, *The Good Women of China* (Vintage,

£9.99), telling others’ stories of growing up amid the turmoil.

She says: “I was one of the lucky ones, I survived without going mad. But still there is a national self-censorship going on. Even 50 years on people still won’t, or can’t, talk about what happened.”

Read more: Kim Jong-un to launch Take Me Out-style contest to find a husband for his sister

As many as two million people perished during The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution as Mao sought to consolidate control 17 years after taking power in 1949.

All professionals – doctors, teachers, lawyers – were targeted in the great purge of the middle classes. Millions of pet cats were killed too, because they were seen as a bourgeois affectation.

Even those with interests such as fashion or literature were seen as traitors. Friends, neighbours and even family members denounced each other, guilty or not.

China expert Frank Dikotter says: “There were several dozen cases of ritual cannibalism. It was about not just eliminating your class enemy, but devouring him.”

Executions included beheadings, boilings, live burials, stonings, drownings and disembowellings

Professor Dikotter says: “In Dao County, thousands were eliminated by driving them over cliffs to plunge to their deaths – men, women and children. The fear was that if you killed the adults the children could return to reap revenge, so it was better to wipe out the family line. In one case a grandmother and her granddaughter were buried alive.

“Then, after 1968, millions were sent to the countryside after they finished school, some of whom were girls as young as 14. Thousands of young girls were left at the mercy of villagers and raped.”

Xinran Xue today



Handout

For Dikotter the Chinese Revolution cemented Chairman Mao's place among the world's most twisted tyrants.

"Stalin may have killed people, but he used his security forces. Mao, however, turned his own people against each other."

But by the time Mao died on September 9, 1976, the most frenzied era of the Cultural Revolution had already lapsed and the Red Guard was being dispersed.

Five years later the Communist Party denounced the decade as "the most severe setback and the heaviest losses suffered by the party, the country, and the people since the founding of the People's Republic".

Mao left behind economic ruin, stagnation and a country which, half a century later, is still too traumatised to come to terms with his cruel Cultural Revolution.

Little red book that inspired a huge terror



Getty

A Communist poster in Mao's era

The flames of the Cultural Revolution were fuelled by Mao's Little Red Book, which was filled with slogans to inspire Communist Party members, such as:

- Every Communist must grasp the truth: political power grows out of the barrel of a gun.
- All reactionaries are paper tigers. In appearance, the reactionaries are terrifying, but in reality they are not so powerful.
- A revolution is not a dinner party, or writing an essay, or painting a picture, or doing embroidery... A revolution is an insurrection, an act of violence by which one class overthrows another.
- Politics is war without bloodshed, while war is politics with bloodshed.
- War can only be abolished through war, and in order to get rid of the gun it is necessary to take up the gun.
- We should support whatever our enemies oppose and oppose whatever our enemies support.

The Cultural Revolution: A People's History, 1962-1976 by Frank Dikotter (Bloomsbury Publishing) is on sale now.

Comments

MikeG

I always wondered who Kim Yong Un modeled himself after. Turns out it was Mao.

DenisePharmer

SAME IN THE UKRAINE IN THE 30'S....STALIN WAS SUCH A NICE GUY...I DON'T THINK HITLER ATE ANYBODY....

SteveStevenson

Just what is coming to Western Europe and North America.

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Pike Place fish-throwers toss salmon to zoo bears

June 2, 2016

yahoo.com

<https://www.yahoo.com/news/pike-place-fish-throwers-toss-salmon-zoo-bears-231936808.html?nhp=1>

SEATTLE (AP) — Fishmongers from Seattle's iconic Pike Place Market tossed salmon to grizzly bears at the Woodland Park Zoo to help raise awareness about the animals.

The famous fish-throwers were on hand Thursday to feed the bears and promote the zoo's upcoming Bear Affair conservation day Saturday and Washington state's Bear Awareness Week, June 4-12.

Grizzly bears have been listed as a threatened species since 1975, although they were briefly delisted in 2007 before a lawsuit reinstated the protections.

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Bizarre Tree Looks Just Like A Real Person Spotted In Bulgaria

malaysiandigest.com

Published on Thursday, 02 June 2016 15:54



This tree looks like it has walked out of the pages of a Tolkien novel.

The 65ft-tall beech tree has somehow grown into the shape of a giant man, sporting proportional legs, arms, a chest and even a head.

The tree, which is found in the heart of the Balkan Mountains, in Bulgaria, often leaves walkers travelling through the forest speechless.

Deyan Kossev, 49, spotted the unusual tree when he was hiking through the forest, saying 'nobody knows' why the trunk and branches have formed this way.

The keen amateur photographer said he thinks the tree looks like Treebeard the Ent, a walking and talking tree from J.R.R. Tolkien's Lord of The Rings-trilogy.

Mr Kossev, from Kazanlak, Bulgaria, said: 'These photos were taken in the central Balkan Mountains, deep in a forest.

'I was walking through the mountains when suddenly I spotted him. I was speechless and stopped in my tracks.

'It was surreal, it looks exactly like a man does. It has the legs, arms, body and head of a man and they are all in proportion too.

'Nobody knows why it has grown into such a bizarre formation.

'People seem to be speechless when they see it. It's unusual to see it in such a human shape.

'It looks like the Ent Treebeard from The Lord of The Rings.'

Malaysian Digest

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Airport Security Staffer Suspended For Secretly Being an Accused Somali War Criminal

Brendan O'Connor

gawker.com



Photo: AP

A security guard at Washington, DC's Dulles International Airport has been placed on administrative leave after a CNN investigation identified him as an accused war criminal. Colonel Yusuf Abdi Ali was head of the Somali army's Fifth Brigade under the dictator Siad Barre, and is accused of overseeing torture and mass executions during Somalia's brutal civil war in the 1980s.

After the Barre regime collapsed in 1991, Ali traveled to Canada but was deported after the CBC aired a

documentary about his alleged war crimes. "He tied [my brother] to military vehicle and dragged him behind. He said to us if you've got enough power, get him back," one witness claimed. "He shredded him into pieces. That's how he died."

CJA/The Guardian

The colonel came to the U.S. on a visa acquired through his wife, Intisar Farah, who became a naturalized citizen. In 2006, Farah was found guilty of naturalization fraud, CNN reports. She'd claimed to be a refugee from the Somali clan Ali is accused of torturing.

Ali is one of more than 1,000 accused war criminals living and working in the United States, according to the the California-based human rights group Center for Justice and Accountability. The CJA has been pursuing litigation against Ali since 2004 on behalf of one of his alleged victims, Farhan Warfaa.

In February, an appeals court denied Ali immunity, allowing the torture and attempted murder lawsuit to proceed; however, it dismissed the elements of the suit accusing Ali of war crimes. From the *Guardian*:

The CJA presented its arguments at a hearing in September, during which the judges were presented with evidence that Ali shot Warfaa five times at close range during an interrogation over the theft of a water tanker. Assuming Warfaa was dead, the lawsuit stated, Ali ordered henchmen to dispose of his body. Instead he was smuggled to safety.

Ali's brigade continued to terrorise the Isaaq clans of the separatist province of Somaliland until Siad Barre was overthrown in 1991.

In dismissing the war crimes element of the CJA lawsuit, the judges sided with a US supreme court ruling in a separate case, *Kiobel v Royal Dutch Petroleum*, in which justices ruled the corporate defendant had no significant contact with the US and therefore did not "touch and concern" the country sufficiently for action under the ATS.

But on the issue of individual immunity, the panel appeared to support the ruling in another CJA case, involving Muhammad Ali Samantar, a member of Siad Barre's revolutionary council. The panel determined that having held a government office did not provide alleged perpetrators of human rights crimes with a shield from prosecution, allowing Warfaa's claims

to continue under the Torture Victim Protection Act.

"The decision appears to reverse more than three decades of legal precedent that has allowed victims of human rights abuses to bring lawsuits against the worst international human rights criminals, when they are found in this country, for mass atrocities committed abroad," CJA lawyer Kathy Roberts said at the time.

"We welcome today's ruling that Colonel Ali must face justice for his crimes in court but we respectfully disagree with the panel's decision to dismiss the mass atrocity claims. The attacks on Mr Warfaa were not isolated. They were part of a systematic and widespread attack on civilians. Colonel Ali should be held to account for all of his crimes."

Now, Ali works for the private security firm Master Security, which has a contract with the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority. Although he had passed a "full, federally mandated vetting process," CNN reports, his employer was "unaware of the pending litigation." The company is reviewing the case, Chief Executive Rick Cucina said, and Ali's airport access has been withdrawn.

Ali's lawyer said that there ought to be no concern over his working at an airport; Roberts disagrees. "It's very deeply disturbing, in part because that is a position of trust," the CJA lawyer said. "He abused that authority terribly in Somalia, and while I don't imagine that he's committing these same kinds of crimes at Dulles airport, I think it's very disconcerting."

Joseph Peter Drennan, Ali's attorney, denies all the charges against his client. "How dare anyone call him a war criminal," Drennan told CNN. "Those are just allegations. If he is indeed a war criminal, take him to The Hague. Or if he is a war criminal, take it up with the immigration authorities. Don't sue him in an American court...My client deserves to live in the U.S. just as any other legal permanent resident."

Outside his apartment, Ali told a CNN correspondent, "To tell you the truth, all is false. Baseless."

Brendan O'Connor[@gawker.com](mailto:brendan.oconnor@gawker.com) [@_grendan](#)

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How Tuberculosis Shaped Victorian Fashion

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The deadly disease—and later efforts to control it—influenced trends for decades



The long, trailing skirts of the Victorian period eventually fell out of favor when they were thought to harbor tuberculosis microbes. (via Wikicommons)

By Emily Mullin

smithsonian.com May 10, 2016

Marie Duplessis, French courtesan and Parisian celebrity, was a striking Victorian beauty. In her best-known portrait, by Édouard Viénot, her glossy black hair frames a beautiful, oval face with sparkling eyes and ivory skin. But Duplessis' fame was short-lived. Like Violetta, the protagonist in Giuseppe Verdi's opera *La Traviata* whose tale Duplessis inspired, Duplessis was afflicted with tuberculosis, which killed her in

1847 at the age of 23.

By the mid-1800s, tuberculosis had reached epidemic levels in Europe and the United States. The disease, now known to be highly infectious, attacks the lungs and damages other organs. Before the advent of antibiotics, its victims slowly wasted away, becoming pale and thin before finally dying of what was then known as consumption.

The Victorians romanticized the disease and the effects it caused in the gradual build to death. For decades, many beauty standards emulated or highlighted these effects. And as scientists gained greater understanding of the disease and how it was spread, the disease continued to keep its hold on fashion.

"Between 1780 and 1850, there is an increasing aestheticization of tuberculosis that becomes entwined with feminine beauty," says Carolyn Day, an assistant professor of history at Furman University in South Carolina and author of the forthcoming book *Consumptive Chic: A History of Fashion, Beauty and Disease*, which explores how tuberculosis impacted early 19th century British fashion and perceptions of beauty.

During that time, consumption was thought to be caused by hereditary susceptibility and miasmas, or "bad airs," in the environment. Among the upper class, one of the ways people judged a woman's predisposition to tuberculosis was by her attractiveness, Days says.

"That's because tuberculosis enhances those things that are already established as beautiful in women," she explains, such as the thinness and pale skin that result from weight loss and the lack of appetite caused by the disease.

The 1909 book *Tuberculosis: A Treatise by American Authors on Its Etiology, Pathology, Frequency, Semeiology, Diagnosis, Prognosis, Prevention, and Treatment* confirms this notion, with the authors noting: "A considerable number of patients have, and have had for years previous to their sickness, a delicate, transparent skin, as well as fine, silky hair." Sparkling or dilated eyes, rosy cheeks and red lips were also common in tuberculosis patients—characteristics now known to be caused by frequent low-grade fever.

"We also begin to see elements in fashion that either highlight symptoms of the disease or physically emulate the illness," Day says. The height of this so-called consumptive chic came in the mid-1800s, when fashionable pointed corsets showed off low, waifish waists and voluminous skirts further emphasized women's narrow middles. Middle- and upper-class women also attempted to emulate the consumptive appearance by using makeup to lighten their skin, redden their lips and color their cheeks pink.

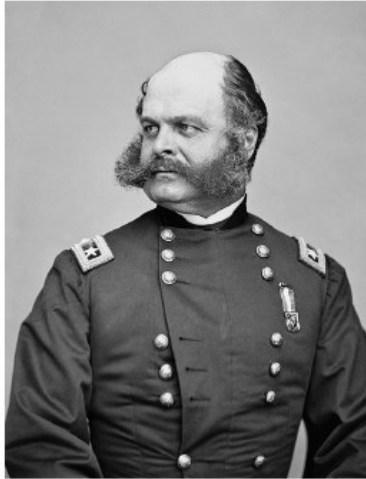
The second half of the 19th century ushered in a radically transformed understanding of tuberculosis when, in 1882, Robert Koch announced that he had discovered and isolated the bacteria that cause the disease. By then, germ theory had emerged. This is the idea that microscopic organisms, not miasmas, cause certain diseases. Koch's discovery helped germ theory gain more legitimacy and convinced physicians and public health experts that tuberculosis was contagious.

Preventing the spread of tuberculosis became the impetus for some of the first large-scale American and European public health campaigns, many of which targeted women's fashions. Doctors began to decry long, trailing skirts as culprits of disease. These skirts, physicians said, were responsible for sweeping up germs on the street and bringing disease into the home.

Consider the cartoon "The Trailing Skirt: Death Loves a Shining Mark," which appeared in *Puck* magazine in 1900: The illustration shows a maid shaking off clouds of germs from her lady's skirt as angelic-looking children stand in the background. Behind the maid looms a skeleton holding a scythe, a symbol of death.

Corsets, too, came under attack, as they were believed to exacerbate tuberculosis by limiting the movement of the lungs and circulation of the blood. "Health corsets" made with elastic fabric were introduced as a way to alleviate pressure on the ribs caused by the heavily boned corsets of the Victorian era.

Men's fashion was also targeted. In the Victorian period, luxuriant beards, sculpted mustaches and extravagant sideburns had been all the rage. The trend can be partly credited to British soldiers who grew facial hair to keep warm during the Crimean War in the 1850s. But facial hair was also popular in the United States where razors were difficult to use and often unsafe, especially when not cleaned properly. But by the 1900s, beards and mustaches themselves were deemed dangerous.



The lush facial hair of the late 1800s wouldn't survive public health efforts of the early 1900s. (Library of Congress)

"There is no way of computing the number of bacteria and noxious germs that may lurk in the Amazonian jungles of a well-whiskered face, but their number must be legion," Edwin F. Bowers, an American doctor known for pioneering reflexology, wrote in a 1916 issue of *McClure's Magazine*. "Measles, scarlet fever, diphtheria, tuberculosis, whooping cough, common and uncommon colds, and a host of other infectious diseases can be, and undoubtedly are, transmitted via the whisker route."

By the time Bowers penned his spirited essay, facial hair had largely disappeared

from the faces of American men, especially surgeons and physicians, who adopted the clean-shaven look to be more hygienic when caring for patients.

The Victorian ideal of looking consumptive hasn't survived to the current century, but tuberculosis has had lingering effects on fashion and beauty trends. Once women's hemlines rose a few inches at the beginning of the 1900s, for example, shoe styles became an increasingly important part of a woman's overall look. And around the same time, doctors began prescribing sunbathing as a treatment for TB, giving rise to the modern phenomenon of tanning.

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Tudor manor house goes on the market for £1.3 million

dailymail.co.uk

Daily Mail

MailOnline US - news, sport, celebrity, science and health stories

Tudor manor house that was home to the Archbishop who helped King Henry VIII become head of the Church of England goes on the market for £1.3 million (and the current owner will throw in £250,000 painting too)

- **Current owner, Septimus Heap author Angie Sage, unearthed a 16th century mural of Henry VIII hidden behind wall**

By Amie Gordon For Mailonline

Published: 17:11 EST, 22 May 2016 | Updated: 21:47 EST, 22 May 2016

An ancient property steeped in history - and with links to King Henry VIII - has gone on the market for an eye-watering £1.3 million.

The Old House in Milverton, Somerset, was once the home of Thomas Cranmer - the man who helped King Henry VIII reign supreme as head of the church of England.

Among its many historic features, the Grade II-listed property boasts six bedrooms, two kitchens, a Tudor fireplace and a great hall.

And while carrying out renovations the current owner Angie Sage - author of the Septimus Heap novels - unearthed a 16th century mural of Henry VIII, concealed behind a wall in the great hall. And she is throwing in the £250,000 painting with the sale of the former rectory.



The historic former rectory was once home to Thomas Cranmer - the man who helped King Henry VIII become head of the Church of England

The Grade II listed property boasts six bedrooms, two kitchens, a Tudor fireplace and a great hall - and is on the market for £1.3million

While carrying out renovations, current owner Angie Sage - the author of the Septimus Heap novels - unearthed a 16th century mural of Henry VIII, concealed behind a wall in the great hall

With sweeping views across Somerset's Quantock Hills, the house is set within its own acre of land with gardens filled with yew, apple and cedar trees



The Old House boasts a



kitchen/breakfast room, second kitchen, pantry, wine store, library, workshop, study, six bedrooms and two bathrooms.

Stunning period features include flagstone floors, oak panelling, leaded stone mullion windows, medieval ceilings, and a Tudor fireplace.

With sweeping views across Somerset's Quantock Hills, the house is set within its own acre of land with

gardens filled with yew, apple and cedar trees.

Parts of The Old House date back to the late 1300s, with Tudor, Georgian and Victorian extensions. The house was originally the residence of the Archdeacons of Taunton.

- Grand Decay: 'Awe-inspiring' Lake District eco-lodge is now... How the squatter who 'stole' a pensioner's three-bedroom... Real-life 175ft 'Rapunzel tower' where 19th-century...

The property was owned by the Church until the 1950s, when it passed into private hands.

For the last nine years it has been owned by children's author Angie Sage and her husband Rhodri.

She penned the bestselling Septimus Heap fantasy series, which has appeared on bestseller lists and received critical acclaim around the world.

Warner Bros. even acquired the rights to make a movie based on the first book.

Lined with bookcases and with a mixture of contemporary and historic features, the library is just one of the impressive rooms in the property



The Old House in Milverton, Somerset, lives up to its name with parts dating back to the late 1300s. It was the home of various Archdeacons of Taunton right up to the late 1800s

One of the two kitchens in The Old House, fitted with wooden units, a Rayburn, woodblock floor and a Belfast sink. Off the kitchen is a walk-in larder and wine store

The 500-year-old portrait showing Henry VIII in his mid 40's, was discovered behind the plaster in the great hall of The Old House five years ago, and experts say it is the earliest known example of renaissance wall art and the only surviving wall painting of the King.

The piece was considered by academics to be of national importance, and gained

media coverage around the globe at the time of its discovery.

It was recently valued by art experts at £250,000.

Angie Sage, 63, said: 'We just fell in love with the house straight away, it's got a lovely atmosphere.

'It's had various bits added on since it was first built. There are two or three parts which are 1300s, the Tudors put



in the first floor and in Georgian times a kitchen extension was added.

'I like that lovely mixture of people putting bits on.'

A dining area: Built around the floor plan of a medieval hall house, The Old House is Grade II Listed and was restored in 1880

One of the six bedrooms: For the last nine years the property has been the home of children's



author Angie Sage and her husband Rhodri.

The Old House boasts a kitchen/breakfast room, second kitchen, pantry, wine store, library, workshop, study, six bedrooms and two bathrooms

The current owner of the property, Angie Sage, said; 'You feel linked to lots of people who have lived here, and feel a part of history. We were really torn about leaving. It's a great family house, and good fun when it's full of people'



Talking about the Henry VIII mural, she said: 'The painting is in the Great Hall. There's a platform where the archdeacons would have sat and held court, right underneath the painting.

'It was a real statement of power. We had no idea it was there at all when we bought the house. About six years ago we had a plasterer in to do some repairs and a big chunk of render fell off and we could see a few brown oak leaves underneath.



'Luckily the guy was a conservation plasterer and he investigated further and found Henry. We were absolutely stunned.

'It dates to sometime between 1532, when he first started talking about declaring himself head of the church, and 1541, when he declared himself

King of Ireland. We had it valued because it seemed like the best way to get people to take it seriously.

'It's the earliest known renaissance style wall painting in Britain and a totally unique feature to the house.

'The painting has been done very much in a 'court' style, it's something you would expect to see in London among the King's Court not in Somerset.



'It looks like the style of Hans Holbein but no one can say for sure if it is.'

She added: 'You feel linked to lots of people who have lived here, and feel a part of history.'

'We were really torn about leaving. It's a great family house, and good fun when it's full of people. But our daughter has left home and the house is quite big for just us.'

'I really just want to be able to write

quietly somewhere.'

The house is now on the market with Strutt & Parker.



The cosy living room includes period features such as the flagstone floors, oak panelling, medieval ceiling, and a Tudor fireplace

The master bedroom is in the Upper Hall, and has wood panelling, a vaulted ceiling, Tudor fireplace with wood burning stove and views over the garden

THE RESIDENCE OF THE ARCHDEACONS OF TAUNTON AND HOME TO THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY



Thomas Cranmer (pictured) lived in The Old House before Henry VIII made him Archbishop of Canterbury in 1533

With history dating back to the 1200s with later medieval, Tudor, Georgian and Victorian extensions, The Old House was originally the residence of the Archdeacons of Taunton.

During the Tudor period, the post was a stepping-stone to high office.

Several former archdeacons, including Thomas Cranmer and the English bishop and politician Stephen Gardiner, feature prominently in the BBC series, *Wolf Hall*.

Henry VIII made Thomas Cranmer Archbishop of Canterbury in 1533.

Cranmer helped build the case for the annulment of Henry's marriage to Catherine of Aragon and supported the principle of Royal Supremacy, in which the king was considered sovereign over the church within his realm.

As Archbishop he was responsible for establishing the first structures of the reformed Church of England and changed doctrines during Edward VI's reign but was executed for treason and heresy after Mary became Queen.

Add your comment



The comments below have not been moderated.

Tracey Anne, Madrid, Spain, about 4 hours ago

That's really cheap considering how much a small 1 bedroomed flat cost in the centre of London. I'd buy it if I had a few million in the bank but alas I do not.

P_L, Boston-MA-USA, about 4 hours ago

What a beautiful house; if I lived there I'd have to be independently wealthy because I'd never want to leave for work. But that first sofa is, shall we say, an acquired taste. I'd want it hauled to the dump in a bio-hazard bag.

almarsh, Milton Keynes, United Kingdom, about 6 hours ago

I'm just off to buy a lottery ticket.

Brooke W., PA, about 10 hours ago

This is the COOLEST house I have ever seen. If I had the money, I would be making an offer right now!

The Denver Kid, Denver USA, about 12 hours ago

Lovely place, and it looks surprisingly cozy and bright. I don't care for the wallpaper and the couch in the library, however.

janeyBB, London-Boston, United Kingdom, about 13 hours ago

As an American woman living in London I have to say that I would love to own this home. I think that during the Tudor age and the reign of good Queen Bess especially, England was in

its golden age and to live in a house from that time would be amazing. I would hold banquets for my friends and insist they dressed in costume and we'd have recitals from the poems of John Donne and performances of Shakespeare plays. I think you can all agree, the idea of me, a petite Hawaiian born woman, living in a genuine Tudor home in Merry England would really be something very special.

Michael Smith, Mönchengladbach, about 14 hours ago

Now that is really worth the dosh, beautiful with timeless appeal for a price that would hardly buy a port-a-loo in that hole called London.

Eleanor, Pontivy, France, about 14 hours ago

I would definitely buy this house, if I could afford it. But that sofa would have to be recovered.

StowTrini, London, United Kingdom, about 15 hours ago

A house of such historic significance should be bought and restored by English Heritage / National Trust and opened to the public. I would hate for it to be sold to someone who destroys it's providence as has almost been done by it's current owner. To say that she's "throwing in the £250,000 painting too"! It's a mural painted onto the wall, to remove it would cause serious damage.

2 of 3 repliesSee all replies

Gus, London, about 14 hours ago

You did notice and understand the bit about it being grade II listed or does your education not extend to that?

niknak, bristol, about 11 hours ago

Thanks Gus for your useless input. I have lived in a grade II listed property. I didn't read the whole piece as what attracted me to this story was the magnificent historical house photographs, I replied to a comment posted by another member that mentioned that any new owner may make changes to the property...thus not being able to, with it being a listed property. This should be grade 1 in my opinion as it is of historical importance, if you look at the difference between grade 1 and grade II. Why don't you go and make yourself a cup of tea and stop trying to find ways to insult people without getting the full picture.

Carole Cooper, Norwich, about 15 hours ago

We won £25 on the lottery this week, which was lovely but oh, if only.... Wonderful house, garden and location. I always wanted to be a children's author. I had the stories in my head, the ones I used to make up for the grandchildren. If only I had gone through with. Again; if only.....Still; we can all dream.

The views expressed in the contents above are those of our users and do not necessarily

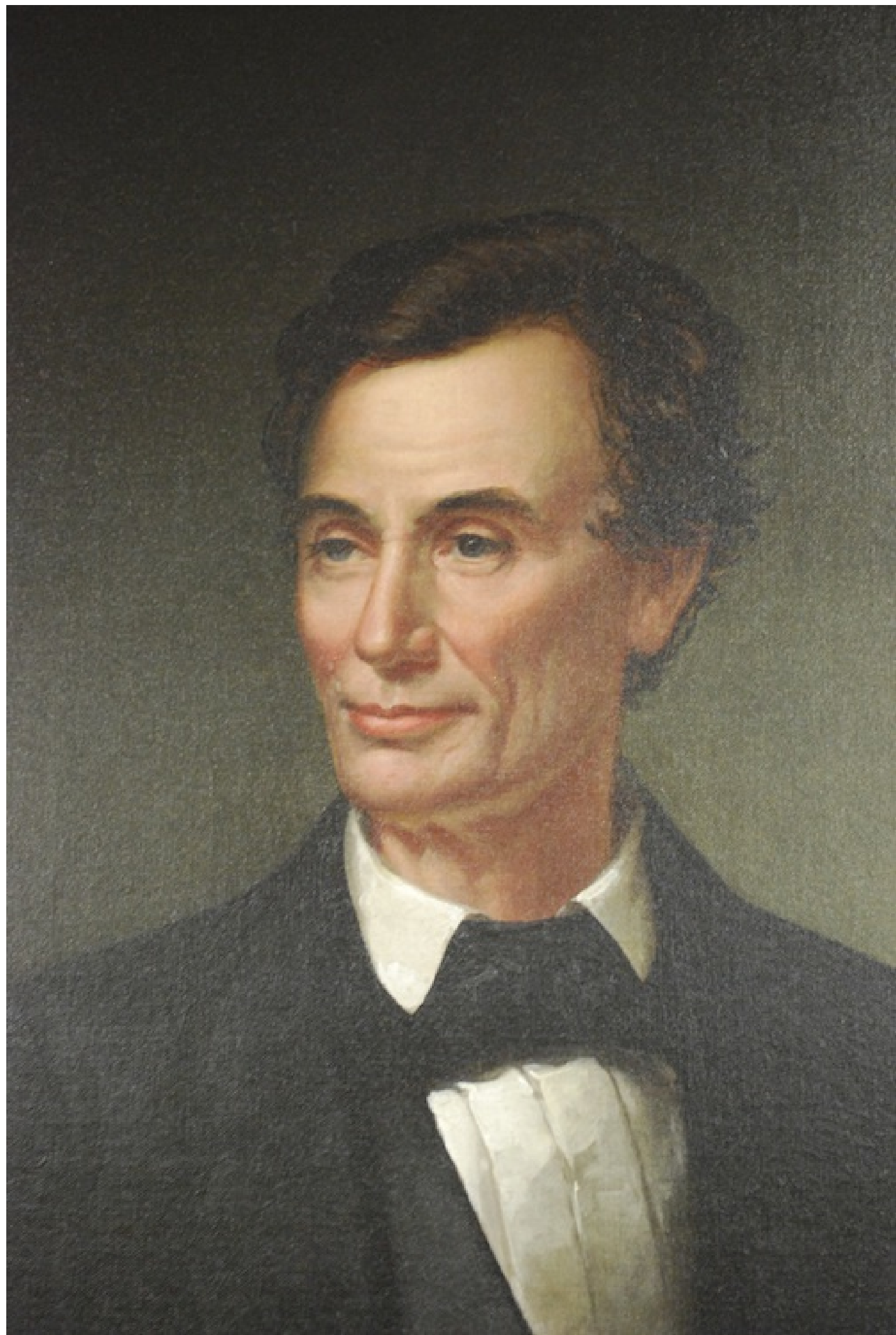
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BIG FELLA

TRY ME!

WIND-UP
WALKING ACTION
WITH MOVING
MOUTH & HANDS

WA

ITEM NO. 80111
MADE IN CHINA



Two Murderers Murder Each Other.

One of the most remarkable personal rencontres ever recorded in the annals of this city occurred on Tuesday last, resulting in the instant death of the notorious William E. Rose, and of the equally notorious Jesse Robinson. Rose shot Robinson fatally through the body and then ran. The dead man (as it were) pursued, without heeding the icy hand of death upon his vitals, or the dr d eternity, upon whose very brink he reeled, and, with his last agonies of exertion, emptied his revolver at his enemy, inflicting wounds which proved instantly fatal, after which he himself almost instantly expired. Since the event this community breathes freer, as many citizens of Jefferson were constantly apprehensive of violence from one or the other of these men. Several suits brought against them in the name of the state of Texas will abate on account of their death. Several of these indictments were for assault with intent to murder. It is a curious coincidence that Rose and Robinson were both convicted of murder by military commissions and sentenced to death. The findings in the case of Robinson were disapproved by General Reynolds and he was set at liberty. The findings in the case of Rose were either not acted on by General Reynolds or else President Grant dodged the responsibility of ordering the execution of the sentence.—*Jefferson (Texas) Radical, April 8.*

Police investigate after umbrella toting robber makes off with cash

10min

wtae.com

<http://www.wtae.com/news/police-investigate-after-umbrella-toting-robber-makes-off-with-cash/39963598>

- Police are investigating after a man toting an umbrella robbed a bank in Squirrel Hill Wednesday afternoon.



Police are investigating after a man toting an umbrella robbed a bank in Squirrel Hill Wednesday afternoon.

PITTSBURGH —Police are investigating after a man toting an umbrella robbed a bank in Squirrel Hill Wednesday afternoon.

Assistant police spokeswoman Emily Schaffer said officers were dispatched to the First Commonwealth Bank in the 5800 block of Forbes Ave.

According to the investigation, a man walked in to the bank with an open umbrella.

As the robber approached the tellers, he pulled out a plastic bag and demanded money.

A weapon was not scene, but the robber gestured as though he had one in his pocket.

The robber fled on foot on Forbes Avenue with an undetermined amount of cash.

Police said he was wearing multiple layers of dark clothing, including sunglasses and a mask.

No one was injured during the robbery.

The Pittsburgh Bureau of Police Violent Crime Unit is investigating.

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The Most Unbelievable Ad You Ever Saw

stuffnobodycaresabout.com

This Unbelievable Ad Appeared in 1920

GLORIOUS OPPORTUNITY TO GET RICH QUICK
Invest in
THE CALIFORNIA RANCHING COMPANY
Now being organized to start a cat ranch in California.

We are starting a cat ranch in California with 100,000 cats. Each cat will average twelve kittens a year. The cat skins will sell for 30 cents each. One hundred men can skin 5,000 cats a day. We figure a daily net profit of over \$10,000.

NOW WHAT SHALL WE FEED THE CATS?

We will start a rat ranch next door with 1,000,000 rats. The rats will breed twelve times faster than the cats. So, we'll have four rats to feed each day to each cat. Now what shall we feed the rats? We will feed the rats the carcasses of the cats after they have been skinned.

NOW GET THIS

We feed the rats to the cats, and the cats to the rats, and get the cat skins for nothing. Shares are selling at 5 cents each, but the price will go up soon.

INVEST WHILE OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS AT YOUR DOOR
CALIFORNIA RANCHING COMPANY

Get Rich Quick fake Ad American magazine 1920

GLORIOUS OPPORTUNITY TO GET RICH QUICK

Invest in

THE CALIFORNIA RANCHING COMPANY

Now being organized to start a cat ranch in California.

We are starting a cat ranch in California with 100,000 cats. Each cat will average twelve kittens a year. The cat skins will sell for 30 cents each. One hundred men can skin 5,000 cats a day. We figure a daily net profit of over \$10,000.

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NOW GET THIS

We feed the rats to the cats, and the cats to the rats, and get the cat skins for nothing. Shares are selling at 5 cents each, but the price will go up soon.

INVEST WHILE OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS AT YOUR DOOR
CALIFORNIA RANCHING COMPANY

So what's the story here? This can't be a real enterprise can it? The following story appeared in *The American Magazine* in 1920 explaining the ad.

The Savings & Trust Co. of Cleveland wanted to warn people about bad investments. An officer of the bank, I. Webster Baker put a large flamboyant poster in the bank's front window and flanked it on one side with the silhouette of a huge cat and on the other with that of a grotesquely large gray rat with the text you see above. The text of the cat and rat farm had been written about 10 years previously by an anonymous author as a joke.

It is such an obvious fake that the original perpetrator did not think it necessary to label it as such, Baker however knowing something of the public's credulity thought it best to make this proposition foolproof. Therefore beneath the exhibit in large letters he warned the passerby as follows: "Some gullible people will try to buy this stock. It is a foolish fake of course but no more foolish than many wildcat schemes being promoted today. Investigate before investing. Don't hand your money over to any unknown glib tongued salesman."

Now comes the amazing part of the story. Immense crowds gathered in front of the window to

read the announcement and wonder at it. The mob grew reaching often out to the curb. Then the curiosity of the public became intensified and after impatiently waiting to get near enough to the window to read the bulletin some went inside the bank offering various rewards to employees to furnish them with a copy of the matter displayed in the bank's window. Others asked for literature about the new company. Officers of the bank began to get inquiries by telephone in person and through the mails. At first the bank officials regarded the inquiries merely as pleasantries but as the requests for information increased they realized that the people asking about the California Ranching Company were really in earnest. The information bureau was kept busy answering inquiries about this wonderful opportunity to get rich quick.

By giving a new slant to an ancient idea Mr. Baker proved conclusively that "real folks" will swallow a fake even when a warning is plastered all over it.

Over 60 people made serious investing inquiries *on the first day alone*. Hundreds of people ended up being fooled by an ad that was plainly a fake before the bank removed it from its window.

Looking at the ad with modern eyes, the first thing that comes to mind is how could people invest in an proposition that is beyond cruel in its business plan? Apparently that did not disturb potential investors. What does not surprise the modern reader is that the ad fooled so many people. Gullibility and greed blind people from the truth. The lesson which many never seem to learn is: never invest in anything without a thorough investigation.

← →

2 thoughts on "The Most Unbelievable Ad You Ever Saw"

1. The indie horror movie "Maniac" (1934) features a scene with a guy explaining the same business that he's running.

1. That is great trivia.

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The Unmasking of a 19th Century Occult Imposter

atlasobscura.com

by J. Barton Scott
August 20, 2015



Helena Blavatsky. (Photo: Public Domain/WikiCommons) Helena Blavatsky. (Photo: Public Domain/WikiCommons) A photo of a seance taking place in 1872, in England. (Photo: Public Domain/WikiCommons) A photo of a seance taking place in 1872, in England. (Photo: Public Domain/WikiCommons) The Theosophical Society, Adyar, India, in 1890. (Photo: Public Domain/WikiCommons) The Theosophical Society, Adyar, India, in 1890. (Photo: Public Domain/WikiCommons) Blavatsky and Hindu Theosophists in India, in 1884. (Photo: Public Domain/WikiCommons) Blavatsky and Hindu Theosophists in India, in 1884. (Photo: Public Domain/WikiCommons)

"For our part, we regard her as neither the mouthpiece of hidden seers, nor as a mere vulgar adventuress; we think that she has achieved a title to permanent remembrance as one of the most accomplished, ingenious, and interesting imposters in history."

With these words, published in 1885, the Cambridge-based Society for Psychical Research brought an end to a scandal that had been brewing for years.

The imposter in question was Madame Helena Blavatsky. Born in Russia in 1831, she had, by her own account, left home at the age of 18 to wander the world. Her self-reported adventures include fighting alongside Italian revolutionary Giuseppe Garibaldi; pursuing Native American magicians in Quebec; and, most pertinent to her later life, studying with mystics in remotest Tibet.

When she reappeared onto the historical record around 1870, Blavatsky quickly insinuated herself into the 19th century's booming séance circuit. Since the late 1840s, people on both sides of the Atlantic had been flocking to mediums who claimed they could channel the spirits of the dearly departed. Then, as now, ghosts thrilled the public—even when the thrills involved were a little dubious. (The two teenaged girls who started the spiritualist craze were later accused of having produced the sound of ghosts rapping on walls by popping their toe knuckles.)



Helena Blavatsky. (Photo: Public Domain/WikiCommons) Helena Blavatsky. (Photo: Public Domain/WikiCommons) A photo of a seance taking place in 1872, in England. (Photo: Public Domain/WikiCommons) A photo of a seance taking place in 1872,

But the usual ghosts weren't good enough for Blavatsky. In 1875, in a Manhattan drawing room, she launched a group with the grand title of the Theosophical Society. Setting ghosts aside, it would search out a higher class of supernatural beings: the "Mahatmas," whom Blavatsky had allegedly met in Tibet.

These men, she said, could ship their souls anywhere in the world at a moment's notice through "astral projection." They could also ship other things—notably letters. Theosophists marveled at the projectile missives that flew through the windows of moving trains or were delivered by enigmatic turbaned men sneaking into tents at midnight. In the 1870s, instantaneous delivery of a message still felt downright miraculous.

in England. (Photo: Public Domain/WikiCommons)
The Theosophical Society, Adyar, India, in 1890. (Photo: Public Domain/WikiCommons)
The Theosophical Society, Adyar, India, in 1890. (Photo: Public Domain/WikiCommons)
Blavatsky and Hindu Theosophists in India, in 1884. (Photo: Public Domain/WikiCommons)
Blavatsky and Hindu Theosophists in India, in 1884. (Photo: Public Domain/WikiCommons)

There is, however, such a thing as too many miracles. At some point, the would-be wonderworker has to call on a friend to keep up with demand—and friends are unreliable. Enter Emma Coulomb, an old acquaintance of Blavatsky's from Cairo. When Blavatsky moved her small band of Theosophists from New York to Bombay in 1879 (and then on to Chennai in 1880), Emma and her husband Pierre joined them as Blavatsky's personal assistants.

Things went badly from the start. Coulomb was prickly, and didn't much like her fellow

Theosophists. The notoriously cantankerous Blavatsky, meanwhile, often turned her temper on friends and associates.



Helena Blavatsky. (Photo: Public Domain/WikiCommons)
Helena Blavatsky. (Photo: Public Domain/WikiCommons)
A photo of a seance taking place in 1872, in England. (Photo: Public Domain/WikiCommons)
A photo of a seance taking place in 1872, in England. (Photo: Public Domain/WikiCommons)
The Theosophical Society, Adyar, India, in 1890. (Photo: Public Domain/WikiCommons)
The Theosophical Society, Adyar, India, in 1890. (Photo: Public Domain/WikiCommons)
Blavatsky and Hindu Theosophists in India, in 1884. (Photo: Public Domain/WikiCommons)
Blavatsky and Hindu Theosophists in India, in 1884. (Photo: Public Domain/WikiCommons)

We don't know what sparked Coulomb's betrayal. But when, in September 1884, she handed a stash of secret letters to the *Madras Christian College Magazine*, it spelled nothing but trouble for Blavatsky and the Theosophists. The magazine published the letters, and scandal erupted. Apparently penned by Blavatsky, these communiqués tell Emma and Pierre when and how to fabricate miracles—causing letters to coalesce from nowhere, roses to shower from ceilings, and astral heads to waft on the evening breeze.

In retrospect, the mechanics of these miracles seem achingly obvious. Once, a bumbling Theosophist opened the door to the wonder-cabinet in Blavatsky's "Occult Room," and a tea saucer came tumbling out to splinter on the ground. After it was placed

back in the cabinet for five minutes, the saucer was miraculously restored. Later investigators pointed out that the cabinet shared a wall with Blavatsky's bedroom; they also uncovered evidence of a secret panel (now destroyed) connecting the two. It was then further revealed that Blavatsky had recently purchased a tea set: how easy to replace the shattered saucer with its matching twin.

This event might seem too mundane to even warrant the word "miracle." But, in the 1880s, investigating such things was serious business. With the new science exploding old conceptions of how the world worked, major minds wanted to make sure that the likes of Blavatsky weren't onto something. Perhaps spirits really were real. Or perhaps, in their misguided way, they pointed to unexplained "psychical" realities as yet unknown.

Further investigations, as we have seen, led the Cambridge Society of Psychical Research to conclude otherwise. Blavatsky was a fraud, pure and simple. Her reputation never quite recovered from this



pronouncement. Even so, her allure lived on, attracting followers well into the next century.

But if it's not miracle that Blavatsky was delivering, what is it? Freethinkers had long claimed that religion per se was mostly fraudulent, a ruse cooked up by crafty priests to dupe and control the gullible masses. By the 1880s, this idea was commonplace, at least in Blavatsky's circles. For such people, perhaps, excessively earnest religion no longer cut it. What Blavatsky delivered was faith laced with doubt—and irresistibly so. Her miracles were so hokey that you couldn't quite believe them, but you couldn't quite look away either.

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Helena Blavatsky. (Photo: Public Domain/WikiCommons) Helena Blavatsky. (Photo: Public Domain/WikiCommons) A photo of a seance taking place in 1872, in England. (Photo: Public Domain/WikiCommons) A photo of a seance taking place in 1872, in England. (Photo: Public Domain/WikiCommons) The Theosophical Society, Adyar, India, in 1890. (Photo: Public Domain/WikiCommons) The Theosophical Society, Adyar, India, in 1890. (Photo: Public Domain/WikiCommons) Blavatsky and Hindu Theosophists in India, in 1884. (Photo: Public Domain/WikiCommons) Blavatsky and Hindu Theosophists in India, in 1884. (Photo: Public Domain/WikiCommons)

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Unusual News Stories From A Small Town Newspaper in 1881

stuffnobodycaresabout.com

Stuff Nobody Cares About

A not so random collection of observations about things you should care about



Interesting "News" From The *Lowville Times* In The Summer of 1881



photo: Yester-Images of Lowville NY on postcards by Larry Myers

Lowville is a sleepy town in Lewis County, upstate New York, about 40 miles east of Lake Ontario and about 90 miles north of Syracuse. Just under 5,000 people call this town home. The most famous person associated with Lowville is probably Peter Ostrum, who played Charlie in the original *Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory*. Peter is a veterinarian at Countryside Veterinary Clinic in Lowville.



lowville new york map circa 1870s

The town was founded in 1797 and by 1881 had a population which was a tad over 3,000 people, mostly comprised of assiduous farmers and merchants.

Like most aspiring small towns across America, Lowville had their own newspaper, a weekly journal comprised of four pages called the *Lowville Times* which existed from 1876-1884. It featured a smattering of national and international news, but the main feature for the citizens of Lowville and the surrounding towns of Copenhagen, Carthage, Constableville, Martinsburgh and Boonville, was the "local matters" section on page three.

It featured not so much news as it did gossip, illnesses, births, deaths, religious revivals, calls for temperance, arrivals and departures of visitors, and rumblings about town and other community news from larger towns around New York State.

An accurate statement in the newspaper of August 25, 1881 read "*A stranger visiting Lowville on Wednesday, the day of the Band Boys' excursion would have pronounced it a dull place.*" What the paper doesn't say is that this was probably true 360 days out of the year. But in the 19th century it was a beautiful town, with hills and rolling meadows. The pace of life was slow

and hard work was rewarded with leisurely pleasures, like regular town picnics featuring music and refreshments.

Besides reporting local mundane items like, "*The picnic was well attended on Saturday last,*" and "*R.J. Richardson and Frank Doig killed 17 woodcock on Tuesday,*" there are stories that are succinct, unusual and interesting.

Here are a selection of short news items with some editorial flair from the summer of 1881:

June 23 – *Mr. Albert Eldridge, foreman in the Lowville Manufacturing Co.'s saw mill had a tussel with a hand spike, and we should judge by the looks of his eye that he got the worst of the bargain.*

June 30 – *How To Wash The Face – Many people object to the use of soap, disliking, the shiny, polished appearance it gives, but any who use Dr. Wilson's directions will find that objection removed. They are as follows: Fill your basin about, two-thirds full with fresh water; dip your face in the water, and then your hands. Soap the hands well and pass the soaped hands with gentle friction over the whole face. Having performed this part of the operation thoroughly, dip the face in the water a second time and rinse it completely. You may add very much to luxury of the latter part of the operation by having a second basin ready with fresh water to perform a final rinse.*

July 14 – *Matthew Burk of Oneida, had a wonderful escape from instant death the other day. He fell from the fifth story of the new casket works, a distance of 60 feet, making several revolutions in the air, and landing safely on his feet. Within an hour he continued his work.*

July 21- *Thirteen deaths from lockjaw, occasioned by accident in the use of the toy pistols occurred in the city of Baltimore alone. If parents, have the interest of their children at heart they will not give them possession of this dangerous toy.*

August 4 – *George Ten Broeck of Saugerties found one of his cows standing near a brook, apparently unable to stir. In the brook a large snake was found in an upright position, with a large portion of its body out of the water. With mouth open and fang extended the snake had charmed the cow.*

August 11 – *A horse belonging to a man named Sanders, in Fishkill, committed suicide recently. The horse got into the river but was rescued. He then deliberately laid down in the water in shallow water and held his head under water until he was drowned.*

August 18 – *The good people of Ox-Bow were somewhat surprised to learn that last week Ira Hinsdale, a wealthy farmer and for over 65 years a resident there and now past 85, was married June 21, at his home by the pastor of the Methodist church, Rev. J. E. Hall, to Miss Katie Dier, who has not reached her 30 year. His former wife whom he had lived with 60 years, and who was the mother of Mrs. N. J. Cooper, Mrs. E. G. Waite and Mrs. Helen Rich, died about 18 months ago. These people are well known. The girl whom, he marries has been keeping house for him for some time. — from The Independent*

September 1 – *Something that is astonishing and beats all former records during the summer months that have passed by. Mrs. Samuel N. Payne would quite frequently find an uncommon large egg in gathering up the eggs so much so that it seemed almost incredible to assign them to the ordinary hen. Last Saturday they killed a large Plymouth Rock rooster about a year, old, and in dressing found him full of eggs, from the size of a small shot, up to the large matured egg with hard shell, ready to be deposited in the nest. The dimensions were 6 $\frac{3}{4}$ by 7 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches. The event created no little excitement around town in the speculative imaginations of mankind. The query is has the like ever been known to any one before? We are prepared for most anything these days, no matter how preposterous it may seem at first. We wait for a response.*

This entry was posted in History and tagged 1880s, Unusual on November 22, 2015 by B.P..

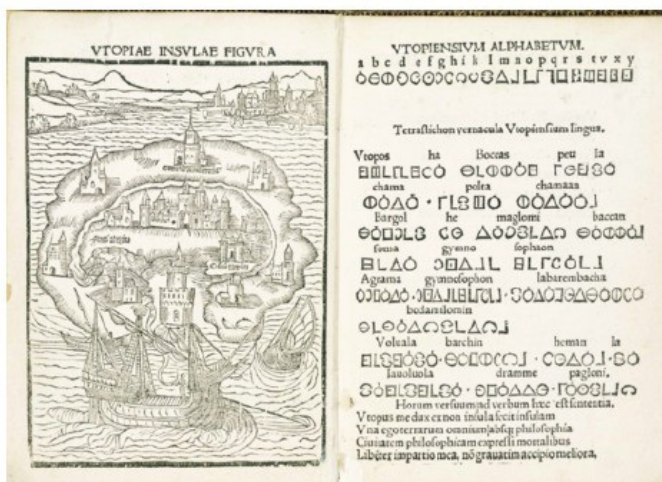
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27 May 2016

THE
BRITISH
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At the start of Thomas More's *Utopia* the narrator describes a fictional meeting with a stranger in Antwerp. The man is sunburned, his beard is untrimmed, his cloak hangs carelessly from his shoulder. He appears to be a sea-captain. Later, the narrator is informed that 'there is no human alive who can give you more information about unknown peoples and lands, and I know you are very eager to hear about them.'

After some description of exotic lands and mythic beasts, the sea-captain – Raphael Hythloday – tells the narrator about a place called 'Utopia', a Communist island of religious toleration where a national system of education is open to both men and women. The island's inhabitants work for only six hours a day and have access to free healthcare. Divorce and euthanasia are legal. The word, 'Utopia' means 'Nowhere land'.



Utopia frontispiece

The Frontispiece of the original edition of 'Utopia', showing the fictional, Utopian alphabet. Published in Louvain : Arte Theodorici Martini, 1516 (C.27.b.30.)

More's *Utopia* – a radical work of political fiction -- is one of the most influential texts in the Western literary and philosophical tradition. This year marks the 500th anniversary of the work's publication, in Louvain, in 1516. Its author, Sir Thomas More (1478-1535) was an English lawyer, diplomat, statesman, writer and philosopher, who worked for Henry VIII.

Throughout the text, the often humorous dialogue between the narrator and Raphael Hythloday allowed More to voice his anger at the social injustice he saw in English society in the early 16th century. The issues he raised included the problems of political influence and capitalism, the role of surveillance, education, the nature of citizenship, and the relationship between urban and rural spaces. These issues are as topical for us today as they were for More. *Utopia* has a timeless relevance.

To mark the 500th anniversary we have a new display in the Treasures Gallery which seeks to place the author and his work in their historical context and illustrate the circumstances under which the text was written. The display brings together printed books and manuscripts.

The manuscripts give a sense of More's intellectual environment and patronage by Henry VIII. Here you can see a beautifully illustrated copy of More's verses on the king's coronation. Henry VIII's support was vital for More's career. In 1517, he joined the King's Council and in 1529 was appointed Lord Chancellor. But it was his relationship with Henry that would, ultimately, lead to his untimely death. A devout Catholic, More refused to acknowledge Henry as the Supreme Head of the Church of England, after the Reformation, and in 1535 he was

executed for treason.



Cat 49 both

Thomas More's Verses on the Coronation of Henry VIII, London, 1509, Cotton MS Titus D iv, ff. 12v-13

Alongside the selection of manuscripts, you can see a series of printed books which illustrate the text's popularity and its afterlives. In the period that followed its publication, the Latin text was translated multiple times -- into German in 1524, Italian in 1548, French in 1550, English in 1551, Dutch in 1553, and Spanish in 1637. It was subsequently re-published in different forms and also established a new

literary genre, that of the Utopian novel, which soon developed in its own right. *Utopia* is a work which continues to inspire authors and artists to the present day – many works of modern science fiction use the form of the Utopian novel. The display runs until 18th September.

~ Mary Wellesley

Posted by Ancient, Medieval, and Early Modern Manuscripts at 12:01 AM

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'Vampire' attack saw Mansfield man injure guard with cross

chad.co.uk

Court Reporter**newsdesk@chad.co.uk**

12:42Wednesday 13 April 201614:41Tuesday 12 April 2016

A psychotic Mansfield man believed he was being attacked by vampires when he slashed a security guard's face with a crucifix at King's Mill Hospital, a court has heard.

James Anthony Timothy Carroll, 36, of Longnor Walk, Mansfield, pleaded guilty to assaulting the guard on Sunday, March 10.

Denis Quinn, prosecuting, said Carroll had been discharged from the hospital in the morning but returned at 8pm and was confronted by the guard Martin Childerly.

Mr Quinn said: "Mr Carroll wouldn't leave and there was no medical reason for him to be there. Mr Childerly tried to escort him out.

"Mr Carroll had a small cross hanging around his neck. The defendant used the cross in a cutting motion across his wrists. There was a tussle and eventually Mr Carroll was pinned to the floor."

Mr Childerly noticed blood dripping from a small laceration on his face.

A nurse witnessed Carroll using the rosary 'to jab at Mr Childerly's face,' the court heard.

Carroll broke away and barged through some doors before he was apprehended by other guards.

Chris Perry, mitigating, said Carroll had 'a troubling background with drug misuse.'

He said: "The drugs available today seem to have a more psychotic side-effect. He became paranoid.

"He believed he was being attacked by a vampire.

"He was trying to use the rosary to protect himself.

"He was suffering from an episode that affected his judgement."

Mr Perry said Carroll had gone to the hospital with a damaged tendon and had returned in the evening.

"He was desperate to get treatment," he said. "He didn't go there for anything sinister."

The court heard Carroll had 11 previous convictions for assault, three of which were in the last 14 months.

Deputy district judge Bridge sentenced him to 16 weeks and ordered him to pay £100 compensation.

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Police release image of no-nose man in hope of solving sexual assault

07:42 EST, 3 June 2016 |

dailymail.co.uk

Daily Mail

MailOnline US - news, sport, celebrity, science and health stories

Police release image of a man with no nose in the hope of finding a sex attacker who groped a woman on tram

- **A woman, 30, was repeatedly groped on a Melbourne tram in May**
- **Victoria Police have released a**

computer-generated image of the man

- **The image is complete but the attacker's nose is obscured with a black bar**
- **Police said this created a more realistic image of the man**

By Steven Trask For Daily Mail Australia

Police have released an image of a man with no nose in the hope it will help them identify a sexual attacker.

Victoria Police released the computer-generated image as they investigated a sexual assault on a Melbourne tram in May.

The image shows a man with dark eyes, brown hair and a black bar obscuring where his nose would be.



Victoria Police released a computer-generated image of the man believed to be responsible for a sexual assault on May 26

Police said the man groped a 30-year-old woman on the bum several times as she travelled on a tram on Melbourne's St Kilda Road.

They said he may have also assaulted another passenger before getting off the tram near the Shrine of Remembrance.

The incident occurred around 8pm on May 26.

A Victoria Police spokeswoman said the nose had been obscured because the victim could not remember what it

looked like.

She said: 'If the victim can't be satisfied with how the image looks, the artist might leave that feature out.'

'They have to be happy with how it looks.'

Anyone with information about the incident is urged to contact Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000 or make a confidential report at www.crimestoppersvic.com.au.

Victoria Police said the assault occurred around 8pm on St Kilda Road near the Shrine of Remembrance

Comments (1)

Acid, LONDON, United Kingdom, about 15 hours ago

I realise it's no joking matterbut a simple way of catching this guy is to let off stink bombs on trains over the next few weeks and then just arrest the guy that looks like him and doesn't get off as without a nose he will be the only person who is unaware of said stink bombs. Sorted.

Published by Associated Newspapers Ltd

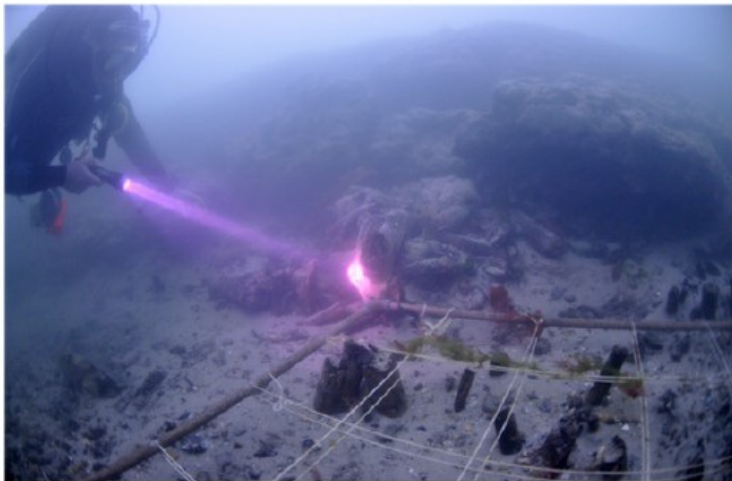
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This 8000 Year Old Underwater Village Was Discovered By A Lobster digventures.com

23 May, 2016 by Maiya Pina-Dacier



Lobster with flints excavated in its burrow as it makes a home below a fallen oak tree in the Bouldnor Cliff landscape that is now 11m underwater Garry and Lawrence recover flint shards from the sea floor at Bouldnor Cliff. Image: courtesy Michael Pitts, Maritime Archaeology Trust

Bouldnor Cliff is now completely submerged below a shipping lane just off the Isle of Wight. DigVentures will be tracking the progress of Garry Momber and his team of underwater archaeologists as they dig below the waves this summer.

Wind the clock back 8,000 years to the Mesolithic and you'll discover a time, long before Stonehenge had even been thought of, when Britain was still connected to mainland Europe and families lived on land that is now below the English Channel.

With the last Ice Age well and truly over, migration into northwest Europe was increasing, populations were booming, and the age of the hunter-gather was drawing

to a close as more and more people took up farming.

But at the same time, sea levels were on the rise. Floods and tsunamis were drowning the land beneath their feet, cutting them off from the mainland. As Britain became an island, and the outline of modern Europe took shape, people also faced a dramatic loss of territory; the now-submerged landscape that surrounds Britain once covered more than 50,000 square km.

Most of the archaeological understanding we have of the time comes from sites that are still on dry land. But if we really want to understand how Mesolithic people lived, how they first settled island Britain and made the shift from hunting and gathering to farming, then we need to look in places that are now underwater.

And that's exactly what Garry Momber and his team of underwater archaeologists will be doing this summer, and all (or rather, partly) thanks to a lobster.



Lobster with flints excavated in its burrow as it makes a home below a fallen oak

Garry is the Director of the Maritime Archaeology Trust and, back in 1999, his team were surveying what they thought were the remains of an ancient forest when they spotted a lobster flinging bits of stone out of its burrow. On closer inspection, those bits of stone turned out to be old flint tools; the divers had their first clue that here, 11m below the waves, on the edge of a shipping lane, just off the coast of the Isle of Wight, lay the remains of an 8000 year-old village.

Since then, the team (made up of volunteers and professionals) has managed to investigate a small area, but even the little they have managed to retrieve has been

tree in the Bouldnor Cliff landscape that is now 11m underwater

enough to show that the Mesolithic people who once lived here were technologically far more sophisticated than anyone had previously imagined.

"Little by little, we've uncovered evidence that shows these people were, in a manner of speaking, 2,000 years ahead of their time. We've found the oldest boat-building site in the UK, the oldest piece of string, and evidence that wheat from the Middle East arrived in Britain 2,000 years earlier than previously thought" Garry told us.



Garry and Lawrence recover flint shards from the sea floor at Bouldnor Cliff.
Image: courtesy Michael Pitts, Maritime Archaeology Trust

"Bouldnor Cliff is completely unique – it's the only submerged Mesolithic settlement that we know of. If we really want to understand the Mesolithic, how people coped with this radically changing world and what technology they had, then this is the site with the highest potential we know of to do that".

That explains why Garry and his volunteer divers are willing to dig underwater, by a shipping lane, with currents so strong they could sweep you away, in visibility that's so bad it's basically dark. It's probably the most extreme set of digging conditions we've ever heard of, but it's now down to Garry and his team to rescue what's left of these people's lives, before it all gets washed away.

"The problem is that increased storminess, stronger tides and more fishing are making it erode fast. The evidence will soon be lost, but because it's underwater and people can't see it, we're not getting the funding we need to give this site the attention it deserves" Garry said.

Even the thought of sharks was not enough to put him off.

"We simply can't bear to let the story of how people first occupied island Britain, and how they made the shift to farming, disappear like that. That's why we'll be diving this summer, to bring back what remains of these people's lives before it's too late".

The team will have one week to bring up as much as they can, and will focus their efforts on an area where prehistoric worked wood is being washed out. Every couple of pieces will add another 1% to the Mesolithic worked wood archive in the UK.

If that doesn't sound impressive, then you'd better reconsider because it's finds like these that are completely changing our understanding of this transformative time.

"It will greatly increase our understanding of the wood-working technology people used to build things like canoes, huts and tools in a period that spans 5,000 years, at a time when the outline of the UK as we know it was being formed, and which sowed the seeds for permanent settlement in the UK" says Garry.

When Garry and his team set out to explore this world that has until now been lost below the waves, they will be diving into a dark soup of silty water. What emerges is yet to be seen, but unless they can get more funding, it will be their last mission, and their last chance to save what's left of Bouldnor Cliff.

It's going to be a hairy task and they're going to need all the support they can get. We'll be following the progress of the dive (which is planned to take place 13th – 17th June) online!

Maiya Pina-Dacier

Comments (3)**1. Ian Smith**

May 23, 2016

Looks fabulous !!!

2. Esther Behnke

May 23, 2016

Wow thats incredible, who knows what is lurking in the deep, Ive sailed over this area a few times, hope you have a good summer weather wise to retrieve as much as possible before its lost to the sea.

3. Kate Bunn

May 24, 2016

While looking for fossilised sharks teeth on Wittering beach, I often see small pieces of wood that look ancient. They're very different to drift wood in appearance, I'm sure they're from the Forrest that is now under the sea.

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#VoteBeaver is the EU referendum campaign we never knew we needed

Elena Cresci

Friday 3 June 2016 Last modified on Friday 3 June 2016

theguardian.com

Why a vandalised Vote Leave sign is making a lot of people on the internet laugh



Conservative campaigner Felix Aubel standing next to a 'Vote Leave' sign, which has been vandalised to read 'Vote Beaver'. Photograph: Felix Aubel/Facebook

Welsh politics and the EU referendum doesn't sound like the most fun thing to be talking about on a Friday afternoon.

Yet a vandalised Vote Leave sign in mid-Wales is doing the rounds this week, leading to an unlikely mock-campaign for a third candidate in the EU referendum.

It all started with this post from Conservative campaigner Felix Aubel, who was very angry to find a Vote Leave sign in Brongest, Ceredigion

had been vandalised to read "Vote Beaver":

At the risk of ruining the joke, people thought it was funny for several reasons:

- 1) Why couldn't the vandals think of anything better than beaver?
- 2) How unhappy someone can be about a sign that reads "vote beaver"
- 3) The fashion-forward shorts-shirt combination
- 4) #VoteBeaver seems like a good enough campaign to get behind

When we originally unearthed this post (full disclaimer, the author of this article was extremely excited about it), it was mostly amusing a section of Welsh Twitter, who were already familiar with Aubel and his campaigning.

— Aaron
Wynne

(@aaroncymru) June 2, 2016

#VoteBeaver @AubelFelix pic.twitter.com/X1qWjRLQPy

"Right, hands up who vandalised Felix's poster?"

— Bolycs Cymraeg (@BolycsCymraeg) June 2, 2016

Methu penderfynu os ddylwn ni fod mewn neu mäs o'r EU? <https://t.co/XzllcfBV9s>
pic.twitter.com/Te06e1Rigl



"Can't decide whether we should be in or out of the EU? Vote Beaver."

— Hedd Gwynfor



(@heddgwynfor)
June 2, 2016

Please help support
@AubelFelix's
campaign.
#VoteBeaver



pic.twitter.com/NXjE0JwakF

— Penbedw (@Penbedw) June 2, 2016

Do Felix Stores have a policy on bilingualism? Appalled that #VoteBeaver shirts are in English only <https://t.co/nqTlscmOR0>

— Mark Mansfield (@MarkMansfield10) June 2, 2016

#VoteBeaver if you don't give a dam.

Referendum on the United Kingdom's membership of the European Union Refferendwm ar aelodaeth y Deyrnas Unedig o'r Undeb Ewropeaidd	
Vote only once by putting a cross ☒ in the box next to your choice Pleidleiswch unwaith yn unig drwy roi croes ☒ yn y blwch wrth ymyl eich dewis	
Should the United Kingdom remain a member of the European Union or leave the European Union? A ddylai'r Deyrnas Unedig aros yn aelod o'r Undeb Ewropeaidd neu adael yr Undeb Ewropeaidd?	
Remain a member of the European Union Aros yn aelod o'r Undeb Ewropeaidd	☐
Leave the European Union Gadael yr Undeb Ewropeaidd	☐
Beaver Beaver	☒

— Glenn Page (@GlennPage_) June 3, 2016

Do the RIGHT thing. #VoteBeaver
pic.twitter.com/H9vVy9QEg8

Aubel is a colourful and well-known character in Welsh politics and has stood for parliament many times, but has yet to be elected. The Welsh minister also stood as the Conservative assembly candidate for Ceredigion in the recent assembly elections.

By Friday, campaign #VoteBeaver had been covered by a few national newspapers and Scottish Twitter were getting involved:



— Angry Salmond (@AngrySalmond) June 3, 2016

Finally, an EU campaign that makes sense.
 #VoteBeaver

pic.twitter.com/p3lr647L6w

— Michael Gray

(@GrayInGlasgow) June 3, 2016

I have identified the #VoteBeaver culprit & he will be reported to the constabulary. Let this be a warning to all. pic.twitter.com/HPqjTRin6y

Inevitably, someone set up a Twitter account:

— Vote Beaver (@VoteBeaver) June 2, 2016

Our battle bus will be out on the streets shortly. Make sure you #VoteBeaver, Take Control. pic.twitter.com/CYBpbT3an1

How does Aubel feel about his unlikely star turn as a Welsh political meme? Well, if his



following posts are anything to go by, he is delighted with the publicity.

— Felix Aubel (Dr) (@AubelFelix)
June 2, 2016

Diolch mawr iawn i bawb sydd
wedi hysbysu'r fandaliaeth o
ddifrodi un o bosteri #VoteLeave
yn
#Ceredigion: @VoteLeaveCymru
@glynbmorgan



“Thank you so much to everyone who has advertised the damage of the vandalism of one of #VoteLeave’s posters in Ceredigion.”

The Guardian has contacted Aubel for comment.

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Was the legendary wizard Merlin actually Scottish?

celebrate-scotland.co.uk



CELEBRATE SCOTLAND

Celebrate Scotland logo

22/05/2016

Was the legendary wizard Merlin actually Scottish?

Dr Tim Clarkson presents research which underlines his belief that the popular image of the 'real' Merlin of



King Arthur's court as a pagan shaman or druid has little basis in the oldest traditions.

The most familiar image of Merlin depicts him as a **powerful wizard at King Arthur's court**, in a setting that evokes an era of chivalrous knights, jousting tournaments and mighty stone castles. This is the Merlin of Arthurian legend, a character largely formed in the imaginations of writers from the twelfth century onwards.

There is, however, another Merlin – a 'wild man of the woods' who can gaze into the future. This is the original figure behind the Arthurian wizard. He appears in a number of medieval Welsh poems that seem to have been based on old legends circulating in Wales before AD 900. He is not actually called Merlin, for this name was invented in the twelfth century. Instead, the poems call him **Myrddin**

(pronounced Mur-thin).



He is a lonely, grief-stricken fugitive who dwells not in Wales but in the ancient wood of Calidon which once covered a large part of southern Scotland. His grief arose after the battle of Arfderydd, a historical event that took place in the year 573, **where he witnessed terrible slaughter**. The battle was a contest between rival groups of North Britons – the ancient inhabitants of northern England and southern Scotland – and took place in the district known today as Arthuret, an old parish north of Carlisle.

A SAVAGE BATTLE

Just as the Arthurian Merlin was based on the earlier Myrddin, so Myrddin himself was based on Lailoken, a wild madman who uttered strange prophecies. Lailoken's story is preserved in Scotland, among the legends of St Kentigern of Glasgow. **The cause of his madness was a savage battle** fought near the

confluence of the Rivers Esk and Liddel on the northern edge of Arthuret parish. This is clearly the battle described in the Welsh poems. In later life, Lailoken received Holy Communion from Kentigern but was killed shortly afterwards near the village of Drumelzier in Tweeddale.

At some point, probably around the year 800AD, tales of Lailoken and the battle of Arthuret/Arfderydd travelled south to Wales, where they became popular among bards and storytellers. They were altered and embellished and put into verse, with **Lailoken's name being changed to Myrddin**, the name of a legendary Welsh seer from whom the town of Carmarthen supposedly gets its name.

Lailoken plainly lies at the root of the Merlin legend. There seems little reason to doubt that he actually

existed. He was probably a sixth-century North British warrior whose mind was overthrown by battle-trauma in the carnage of Arfderydd. After fleeing the battlefield he **lived as a recluse in the Wood of Calidon**, uttering words of doom about the future. Later, he perhaps became a well-known local 'curiosity' around whom stories began to be told. If this is indeed what happened, then Lailoken – the wild man of southern Scotland – can be identified as the real or original Merlin.

THE MEDIEVAL SOURCES

One popular modern theory sees the original Merlin as a pagan shaman or druid who resisted the spread of Christianity. Its supporters point to supernatural themes in Welsh traditions of the battle of Arfderydd, citing these as evidence for the survival of pre-Christian beliefs in the late sixth century. Myrddin's friendship with woodland animals is likewise seen as Celtic nature worship, while Lailoken's receiving communion from Kentigern is interpreted as a renunciation of paganism.

However, the medieval sources clearly identify both Lailoken and Myrddin as Christians. **There is little evidence that the original figure behind them was a pagan.** In fact, the idea that he was some kind of nature-worshipping druid appears to have taken shape in the late nineteenth century. It seems more likely that the historical figure at the root of the Merlin legend was a Christian from birth.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr Tim Clarkson has written several books on early medieval Scottish history. His latest book, *Scotland's Merlin: a Medieval Legend and its Dark Age Origins*, seeks to uncover the real figure behind the famous wizard of Arthurian saga.

***Scotland's Merlin* is published by John Donald**, an imprint of Birlinn Limited (£14.99, paperback).

(Top image St Kentigern and the wild man depicted in a window at Stobo Kirk. Image © Freyja Appleyard-Keeling)

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What's in a name? European Court rules against noble title

June 2, 2016

yahoo.com

<https://www.yahoo.com/news/whats-name-european-court-rules-against-noble-title-110935834.html?nhp=1>

BERLIN (AP) — A German man who added nobility titles to his name after obtaining dual citizenship in Britain will have to settle with being plain-old Nabil Peter Bogendorff von Wolffersdorff in his native land following a ruling from the European Court of Justice.

The Luxembourg-based court said Thursday that EU member states aren't always obliged to recognize name changes of a citizen who has dual citizenship with another in the bloc that contain "tokens of nobility" not accepted by that state.

Germany abolished titles of nobility in 1919, but the man added both "Graf" and "Freiherr" — Count and Baron — to his last name when living in Britain more than a decade ago, becoming Peter Mark Emanuel Graf von Wolffersdorff Freiherr von Bogendorff.

Upon return home, German authorities rejected the change.

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Who stole this huge inflatable turd from a Spanish square?

08/06

thelocal.es

THE LOCAL

The Local



Who stole this huge inflatable turd from a Spanish square?

Who stole this huge inflatable turd from a Spanish square?

Fiona Govan · 8 Jun 2016, 16:19

Published: 08 Jun 2016 16:19
GMT+02:00

Someone took a campaign designed to rid the streets of unsightly dog excrement a little too literally.. by taking the huge inflatable poo home with them.

As The Local reported last week, the town of Torrelodones has dumped an inflatable giant poo in a public square as part of a campaign to rid its streets of dog mess.

The blow-up sculpture, which is three metres wide and over two metres high, was installed in the town square of Torrelodones last month to serve as a reminder to pet-owners to clean up after their pooches.

But at the weekend the inflatable excrement went missing.

"A public awareness campaign launched by Torrelodones council in the hope of making residents collect dog excrement has achieved its greatest success," joked a spokesman for the town hall.

"Because even the inflatable representing a giant turd has been 'cleaned up'."

But town authorities confirmed that they would continue the campaign undeterred at the loss of the €2,416 sculpture.

"Despite this disappearance we will restart the campaign next week once the company that designed the inflatable provides a new one," they said.

The inflatable had been accompanied by the sign: "This is one of the greatest obstacles to

community spirit in our town. If you own a dog, please help us."

Authorities in the town of 22,000 residents in the foothills of the Sierra Norte just 25 km northwest of the capital claim that council services have to rid the streets of up to half a ton of faeces left by irresponsible dog owners each day.

"Torrelodones has around 6,000 dogs and let's say they do an average of three dumps a day, that is around 15,000 separate poos producing some 500kg of excrement a day. Many owners just don't pick up," Ángel Guirao, spokesman for the town council explained.

"That is more or less what this inflatable represents, the amount of poo left on the streets across the town each day. We are asking dog owners, in a fun and non-aggressive way, to realize the importance of clearing up after their pets."

Residents in the town had been encouraged to take selfies alongside the 'giant poo' and post the photos on social media with the hashtag #nomascacas – No more poos.

The council posted a new photo with the missing turd:

Éxito absoluto en #Torrelodones de la campaña contra las deposiciones caninas.
#nomascacas <https://t.co/IEUJrDr2US> pic.twitter.com/6xMWnUEooW

— Ayto Torrelodones (@Torrelodones_wb) June 8, 2016



The giant blow-up poo to remind dog owners to be responsible.
Photo: Ayuntamiento de Torrelodones

Calle Marques de Cubas 25, 3 izq
28014 Madrid
España

Who stole this huge inflatable turd from a Spanish square?

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Witchcraft and the Walking Toad! - Beachcombing's Bizarre History Blog

strangehistory.net

Beachcombing's Bizarre History Blog

Witchcraft and the Walking Toad! January 21, 2015

Author: *Beach Combing* | in : *Modern* , [trackback](#)



toad witch

If you want to know what beliefs were really held out in the wilder parts of the English countryside in the nineteenth century there are two important sources: folklore collections and, more to Beach's taste, legal proceedings. Every so often a member of the British rural classes with conservative inclinations and beliefs, which would have shamed many of his or her contemporaries back into the Middle Ages, appears in the dock and defends extreme actions through obvious sincere beliefs in witchcraft and kindred superstitions. We are here at East Dereham in Norfolk, April 1879. The offence

was that William Bulwer had hit and assaulted Christiana Martins daughter of Mrs Martins. But what soon emerges is his belief that the Martins family were all witches. Enjoy the clerk trying to prevent the flow of obscenities.

The following case of alleged witchcraft has recently been heard at the East Derham petty session: William Bulwer, Etling Green, was charged with assaulting Christiana Martins, a young girl, who resides near tha Etling Green toll bar. Complainant deposed that she was 18 years age, and on Wedneaday, the 2nd mat., the defendant cams to and abused her. The complainant, who looked scarce more than a child repeated, despite the efforts of the magistrates' clerk to stop her, and without being in the least abashed, some of the worst language that it was possible to conceive—conversation of the most gross description, alleged to hava taken place between herself and the defendant. They appeared to have got from words to blows, and, while trying to fasten the gate, the defendant hit her across the hand with a stick.

William though had his reasons though. Beach has never come across this strange toad belief: **can anyone help me track it down**, [drbeachcombing AT yahoo DOT com](mailto:drbeachcombing@yahoo.com) For frog witch beliefs follow the link.

Mrs Martins [mother of C] is an old witch, gentlemen, that is what she is, and she charmed me, and I get no sleep for her for three nights, and one night, at half-past eleven o'clock, I got up because I could not sleep, and went out and found a 'walking toad' under a clod that had been dug up with three-pronged fork. That is why could not rest; she is a bad old woman; she put this toad under there to charm me, and her daughter is just as bad, gentleman. She would bewitch anyone; she charmed me, and I got no rest day nor night for her, till I found this 'walking toad'(laughter) under the turf.

She dug hole and put there to charm me, gentleman, that is the truth; she is a bad old witch. I got the toad out, and put it in cloth, and took it upstairs and showed it my mother and 'threwed' it into the pit in the garden. I can bring it and show it to you, gentlemen.'

Those inserted 'laughters' are always a problem. When 'Hodge' hears laughter in court, he is in serious trouble.

Mr Hyde (laughing): What do you say, she bewitched you?

Defendant: Yes, sir. She went round this here 'walking toad' after she had buried it; and I could not rest by day sleep by night till I found it. She is a bad old witch, and is not going to come it over me though. Her daughter is as bad she is, and encourages her in it.

There follows a nice Victorian non-sequitur, but note that William cannot stay away from the witching. Note too that fascinating 'she is not fit to live': the defendant is still living in the burning years!

The bench: Do you go to church?

Defendant: Sometimes I goes to church, and sometimes I goes to chapel, and sometimes I don't nowhere. Her mother is bad enough to do anything; and to go and put the 'walking toad' in the hole like that, for man which never did nothing to her, she is not fit to live, gentlemen; and to do such a thing, it is not as if I had done anything to her. She looks at lots of people, and I know she will do some one harm. (Laughter.)

The Chairman: Do you know this man. Superintendent Symonds? Is he sane? (Laughter.)

Superintendent Symonds: Yes, sir, perfectly. (Laughter.)

Defendant: It is quite true, gentlemen. I showed the toad to my mother, and can bring for you to see.

Of course, in these unenlightened times the offer was gently refused and poor William was fined 1 shilling and 12 shillings six pence costs. Presumably the Martins went cackling back to their coven.

21 Jan 2014: Our friends at Obscuragator write: "'Walking Toad" is a nickname for the natterjack toad, *epidalea calamita*. The only account I could find of a witch trial where the alleged witch was accused of using a toad (or in this case toads) to keep a person from sleeping was Oliffe Bartham of Shadbrook in 1599. From the Wikipedia entry for the Bury St. Edmunds witch trials, there is this: "Oliffe Bartham of Shadbrook was executed,[7] for "sending three toads to destroy the rest (sleep[8]) of Joan Jordan".[6]" I came across a few witchcraft forum posts that make mention of the story Mrs. Martin and an article about the incident was (apparently) printed in Reynolds's Newspaper (London, England), Sunday, April 13, 1879; Issue 1496. Also, more than one poster made mention of the "Toad Bone ritual." Beach has some problems with this as the two rituals seems very different but the toad bone ritual (with pictures!) has been covered in a previous post. Huge thanks to Obscuragator!!

25 2015 Jan Bob S: 'Being keen on strange stories to do with toads and frogs, I was interested in your posting regarding the folklore beliefs regarding toads and witchcraft appearing through the court case in Norfolk. I suspected that the term "walking toad" referred to the natterjack toad,

sometimes known as the "running toad". This view was confirmed in a webpage titled American Folkloric witchcraft which is relevant both to this, and to your previous posting regarding toads and horse-whispering, which provides other accounts of the toad bone and its use. This site states that a "walking toad" is the natterjack toad, although the description given of a toad with a yellow band round the neck doesn't quite fit- the yellow line is down the back.

<http://afwcraft.blogspot.co.uk/2011/07/toad-bone-amulet.html>. From this webpage I found a link to the following detailed historical and folklore treatment of the toad bone amulet, with a great bibliography: <http://web.archive.org/web/20041015023500/http://www.the-cauldron.fsnet.co.uk/toad.htm>. The following relevant passage appears: "The commonplace association in East Anglia between the toad-bone ritual and the possession of witchcraft power is indicated by the fact that the very word for 'bewitchment' or the practise of enchantment in Norfolk was 'tudding'; lit. 'toading' (Porter, [Cambridgeshire Customs and Folklore]1969, pp.50-51). In the Folklore Record (II.pp.207-9) of 1879, it is interesting to note that a man charged with assault, excused himself by declaring that the woman assaulted was a witch who had bespelled him by means of a 'walking toad' (Kittredge, [Witchcraft in Old and New England] 1929). A 'walking toad' is a Natterjack, the type of batrachia most commonly recommended for the bone ritual in the East Anglian accounts (see Evans, 1960, 1962)." Walter Rye in his "Index Rerum of Norfolk Antiquities" (1899) p.82 gives the following references to "Walking Toad" superstitions which would be interesting to follow up : East Anglian i:310, 364 ; East Anglian iv: 191, .

<http://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000508/18920611/107/0004>

<http://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000444/18901104/033/0002> I have just found those East Anglian references here- they don't add much! <http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc1.a0002036234;view=1up;seq=322> <http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc1.a0002036234;view=1up;seq=376> Also I came across an account of the incident in East

Dereham involving the Walking Toad, written by Augustus Jessopp in a magazine in Nov 1882 and appearing in a later book of his writings. The author, a clergyman in Norfolk/ Suffolk (which he refers to as Arcadia) disguises the names of the characters involved, and the place name, but provides extra details which, if not just the workings of his literary imagination, add something to the account as reported from the court case. The chapter in the book is worth reading for its references to other local folklore too. (See details of sources, and text on the attached word document) The case is mentioned in passing in a newspaper cutting (sheffield) on surviving superstition which you may find interesting. The cases mentioned may all be known to you already, or may lead to interesting blog-fodder!

25 Jan 2015: Liz writes in: 'Regarding toads and their use in witchcraft, I vaguely remember reading that a witch was accused of hitching a toad to a miniature plough to blast the crops of a farmer who had incurred his wrath. I have a feeling that it was the man murdered in the UK just after the war and was found on a hill with slashes on his face, presumably in a 'cutting above the breath' act.'

28 Feb 2015: Bob wrote back with some more stuff. Sorry Bob that this comes up so late. 'You noted in your original post you'd be interested to know more of the beliefs behind the incident of the walking toad being buried. Quite rightly, this appears to be different to the toad bone ritual, which also involves burying a toad (but in an anthill, in order to get the bones of the toad). Christina Hole in her "Witchcraft in England" (1945) has the East Dereham case (page15), citing the Leigh Chronicle of 17th April 1878. She writes: "In 1879 William Butler of Etling Green was charged at East Dereham Petty Sessions with striking and abusing Christiana Martins, a girl of eighteen. His defence was that she and her mother were both witches and had prevented him from sleeping by burying a "walking toad" near his house. This was an ancient and well-known form of magic, and a charm to secure command over a fellow-creature by destroying such a toad and using its bones is

still known in Norfolk” The last sentence seems to hint at a recognised toad ritual or spell, differing from the toad-bone one, but I could find no explicit reference to it, apart from one modern reference: In “Charms Spells and Curses” an e-book by Victor J. Banis (2012), p.58 we find: “If a walking toad be buried in the name of a certain person, and the one casting the spell circle around it, the one whose name was pronounced will not rest by day or night until he find it and burn it.” I am unsure if this come from an old source, or has just been suggested by the Etling Green case itself. In my researches into the “entombed toad” phenomenon some years back, I collected a number of references to toads being buried enclosed in flowerpots and other sealed containers by those experimenting or just curious about the toad’s alleged long vitality- but that is another story! However, I certainly remember finding some references to a tradition of toads being buried in earthenware pots, in the context of a fertility ritual. I will look to see if I can find these notes....’ We can hope!

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A Court Just Stayed This Texas Man's Execution Because a Witness Was Hypnotized

By Casey Tolan

fusion.net

5/27/16 7:18 PM

A court just stayed this Texas man's execution because a witness was hypnotized

By Casey Tolan



Charles Flores, a Texas death row inmate who was scheduled to be executed next week June 2, was granted a stay of execution late Friday afternoon.

The Texas Court of Criminal Appeals stayed Flores' execution date and sent his case back to the trial court for a hearing based on his claim

that improper hypnosis was used on the main eyewitness in his murder trial.

As Fusion reported earlier this month, Flores was convicted for the 1998 murder of Elizabeth "Betty" Black in a Dallas suburb. A jury sentenced him to death the following year even though prosecutors presented no physical evidence linking him to the crime, and the only witness who saw him at the scene, Jill Barganier, was hypnotized by police.

As part of Flores' final appeal, which was filed last week, psychology professor Steven Lynn said in an affidavit that recent research shows the hypnosis could have made Barganier create false memories. "Clearly, the techniques that were used to refresh Ms. Bargainer's memory would be eschewed today by anyone at all familiar with the extant research on hypnosis and memory," Lynn wrote.

That hypnosis was the crux of the appeals court's ruling. The court approved his application for a writ of habeas corpus by essentially finding reason to believe a reasonable juror may not have convicted him if they had heard evidence like Lynn's testimony.

Now, the trial court in Flores' case will hold a hearing specifically on the hypnosis issue and the eyewitness identification. If Flores' lawyers can show by a preponderance of the evidence that a jury would acquit him today after hearing new scientific evidence, it would lead to a brand new trial for Flores, more than 17 years after he was convicted.

"We're ecstatic for Charles right now," said Gregory Gardner, one of Flores' attorneys. "This hypnosis was always very troubling from the beginning... and we're thrilled that now the Texas courts are going to take a closer look at it."

The warden at the Polunsky Unit, the Texas death row prison where Flores is housed, is expected to notify him of the ruling later tonight.

While the appeals court focused on the hypnosis issue in its ruling, Flores also brought up other issues in his appeal—including the fact that his white co-defendant received a much shorter sentence than he did and is currently out of prison on parole.

Two of the nine judges on the appeals court, which is the highest court in Texas that hears criminal cases, dissented from granting a stay. Only one of the judges who supported Flores' application, David Newell, wrote an opinion explaining his thinking.

"Eyewitness misidentification is the leading cause of wrongful convictions across the country," Newell wrote. "We may ultimately grant relief. We may ultimately deny relief. But either way, given the subject matter, by granting a stay this Court acknowledges that whatever we do, we owe a clear explanation for our decision to the citizens of Texas."

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From grimy ghosts to vampire melons - it's the world's weirdest folklores

16:24, 20 May 2016 Updated 16:26, 20 May 2016 By Jon Livesey

mirror.co.uk

The world's full of tales of witches and other ghouls - some of them plain weird

Every culture and country has its own weird, whacky and wonderful folklore.

Whether it's toe-munching mums in the US, Iceland's child-snatching cats or our very own medieval cart-jacking hero Robin Hood, we all have memories of fairy tales, songs and legends of yore etched into our subconscious.

Originally designed as moral guides for youngsters, these yarns blur over time and lose their original meaning, leaving fantastical – and often frightening – stories of mythical creatures hell bent on terrorising children in their wake.

While there are plenty of examples of weird folklore to keep you occupied for a lifetime, here are some of more bizarre ones from across the globe.

Filth Licker (Japan)

Keep your bathroom clean - because the filth licker loves germs, apparently

Japan isn't lacking when it comes to the weird and the wonderful, and this is equally true of its folklore

The Japanese, for instance, have numerous legends about ghosts, ghouls and other nasties, called "yokai", who love nothing more than hanging out in toilets.

This isn't some flash in the pan trend, with these grimy gremlins often popping up in Manga comics, films and anime, but one of the weirdest loo lovers has to be the Akaname, or 'Filth Licker'.

Hannah Byrnes has travelled the world, collecting scary stories along the way

Legend has it the disgusting red-skinned beast has an extraordinarily long tongue, supposedly used to lick scum from dirty baths.

While this might seem like a cost-effective cleaning service, Akaname is also believed to attack anyone who dares visit the toilet.

However, help is at hand. Akaname hates clean bathrooms. A simple scrub and off he goes in search of another poor victim's grubby tub.

Vampire Watermelons (Romania)

Romanians believe watermelons will turn into vampires if left to go off

Watermelons may well be the food of choice on hot summer days, but Romanians know better than to leave this delicacy uneaten past its sell-by date.

In the land that gave birth to Dracula, the juicy fruit is believed to transform into a vampire if it's not eaten in time.

Fortunately, these Rocky Horror Show wannabes have no teeth, but they are reportedly known to chase children before bumping into their legs, growling and shaking.

A known remedy is to place these demonic desserts of the night in a pot of boiling water, but we wouldn't advise eating a boiled watermelon.

Hairy Toe (USA)

Legend has it, one mum decided to cook a giant's toe her son found in the garden - with dire consequences

Ever felt the need to gnaw on a giant's body parts? We didn't think so.

However, one Maryland mum thought nothing of cooking up a treat when her young son discovered a huge toe in their garden.

As the story goes, the boy found the toe sticking out of the garden and decided to show his parents.

His mum was so thrilled she decided to cook it for dinner.

Even stranger, the whole family agreed it was the best thing they'd ever tasted and went to bed.

As you would expect, the giant eventually wakes up and goes in search of his missing body part (why he didn't wake up when it was removed is anyone's guess!).

He finds the boy and gobbles him up whole, from top to toe.

Yule Cat (Iceland)

The Yule Cat is a big black beast who kidnaps kids on Christmas Eve

Cats are relatively a new to Iceland, first arriving with Viking settlers during the 9th Century.

The Norse were not short of their own wacky legends and somewhat inevitably, folklore followed, with tales of fearsome grave-robbing ghouls, who should be called 'Plundercats', but aren't.

The most famous story is of the 'Yule Cat', a big black beast who is the pet of Grýla the Giantess.

The Yule Cat follows small children around on Christmas Eve, kidnapping the unlucky ones

and taking them home for his mistress to turn into a stew.

Luckily, it's easy to fend off the Yule Cat. It won't touch children wearing new clothes, as he knows they are cared for and their parents will come looking for them.

Baba Yaga (Russia/Ukraine)

Baba Yaga is an expert at sniffing out kids - and if they don't do her chores, she eats them

In Russia and the Ukraine, there is a wealth of folklore regarding witches living in the forest.

The most famous is 'Baba Yaga', who allegedly looks like a kindly old grandmother.

When she is not flying around in a giant pestle and mortar, Baba Yaga can be found relaxing in a hut which stands on chicken legs and wanders around the forest.

Beware this little old lady, though, as her oversized and warty nose can sniff out children, whom she tricks into doing chores for her.

Watch out for the witches in the woods...

If the kids do the chores then she will release them; otherwise, they add to the washing up by becoming the dish of the day.

It seems a fair bargain until you realise it is impossible to meet her demands.

She asks children to run a nice bath but upon entering the bathroom children will find the old tub is full of holes, and there's no running water.

Luckily, Baba Yaga's home is surrounded by under-appreciated gates and grumpy animals that will happily help children escape if they are nice to them and give them cookies.

Hannah Byrnes has travelled the world researching folklore in different cultures.

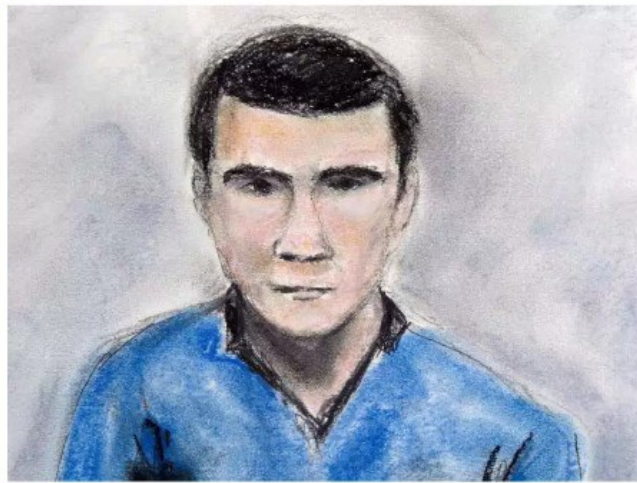
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Judge unseals court documents connected to Calgary's worst mass killing, but imposes publication ban

Jason van Rassel, *Calgary Herald* More from Jason van Rassel, *Calgary Herald*

calgaryherald.com



A sketch of Matthew de Grood,

appearing in a Calgary court on Tuesday, April 22, 2014. Janice Fletcher / THE CANADIAN PRESS

A judge's decision Wednesday will give the public access to previously-sealed court documents connected to the multiple killing in Brentwood last year, but a publication ban prevents anyone from disseminating their contents until the suspect goes on trial.

Provincial court Judge Timothy Hironaka said his ruling is an attempt to strike a balance between the constitutionally-grounded principle of keeping the courts open to the public, while at the same time ensuring the suspect, Matthew de Grood, is given a fair trial.

Balancing those sometimes competing interests "is never an easy task," Hironaka told court.

De Grood, 23, is accused of fatally stabbing Lawrence Hong, Josh Hunter, Kaitlin Perras, Zackariah Rathwell and Jordan Segura on April 15, during a get-together celebrating the last day of classes at the University of Calgary. He is scheduled to stand trial on five counts of first-degree murder sometime in 2016.

The Calgary Herald, CBC Calgary, Global Calgary, CTV Calgary and the Globe and Mail petitioned the court for access to affidavits filed by police in support of search warrants obtained in pursuit of their case against de Grood.

It is common for media outlets to seek documents filed in connection with major court cases as a way of evaluating the prosecution's evidence and examining how the case was investigated. In this case, the Herald and the other media applicants argued that potential jurors are able to distinguish unproven allegations published before trial from evidence that is presented inside the courtroom during a trial.

"Our preference would be for the material, or a portion of it, to be available to the public now to allow the public to have a greater understanding of the information around the de Grood

arrest," the media group's lawyer, Matthew Woodley, said outside court.

"We had argued that jurors are able, in the vast majority of cases, to put evidence that they ought not to consider out of their mind and to render a verdict solely based on evidence that's heard in the trial."

However, lawyers representing Alberta Justice and the Calgary Police Service opposed the media's application, arguing that publishing the documents' contents could taint the jury pool. Police also petitioned the court on behalf of the victims' families, arguing that unsealing the documents prior to the trial would be an undue invasion of their privacy and that of witnesses.

Hironaka's ruling allowing the unsealing of the documents came with a condition: that the names of any witnesses and their identifying information must be removed before they are made available for viewing by the media or any member of the public who requests the documents from the court.

Making a publication ban part of Hironaka's order will ensure de Grood will get a fair trial, said Crown prosecutor Neil Wiberg, who represented Alberta Justice.

"Some of the evidence (in the documents) may not be admissible in court and so potential jurors may make their decisions on material not actually before the court," Wiberg said outside court.

"This ensures that potential jurors to the matter, when they make their decision, will do it based on the evidence before the court."

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Yale's Mysterious Fossil Beast

scientificamerican.com

Despite being discovered over a century ago, *Synoplotherium* is still an enigma

• By Brian Switek on May 30, 2016

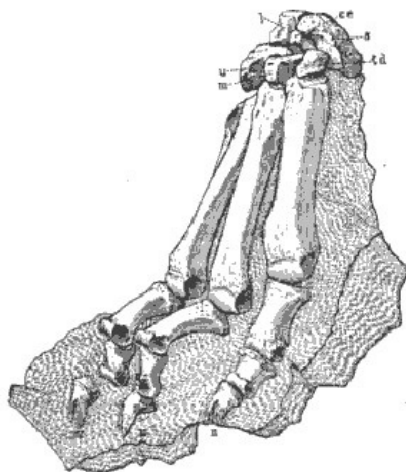


I can't help but feel a little bit sorry for *Synoplotherium*. Every time I've gone to visit the old beast, safeguarded behind a pane of glass at Yale's Peabody Museum of Natural History, I've been the only one present to pay my respects to this enigmatic mammal.

As in any museum they inhabit, dinosaurs steal the show at the Peabody. The skeleton of O.C. Marsh's great *Apatosaurus* – or is that *Brontosaurus* now? – leads a parade of tail-dragging saurians who show the osteological frames that artist Rudolph Zallinger used to paint the stunning *Age of Reptiles* mural that runs the length of the room. Yet, despite their celebrity, dinosaurs didn't lead the way in introducing Peabody visitors to the past. The all-but-forgotten *Synoplotherium* has that honor.

The skeleton was found in the 45-million-year-old Eocene rock of Wyoming's Bridger Basin, dug up by field workers Sam Smith and Jacob Heisey in 1875. It was one of the most complete fossil mammals yet found, and Marsh dubbed the species *Dromocyon vorax* for its dog-like appearance and the voracious appetite it must have had. Only after decades of osteological scrutiny did other researchers realize that Marsh's "*Dromocyon*" was really a more complete representative of *Synoplotherium* – a title dubbed by Marsh's nemesis E.D. Cope.

Marsh would have been furious at the name change, and he would have been aghast to see it on exhibit. Marsh fervently believed that bones were for experts only and any attempt at public display hindered research. Reconstructions should only be done on paper, never with real bones. It's clear that not everyone agreed with this view, though, as the Peabody's paleontologists went about mounting the bones of *Synoplotherium* almost immediately after Marsh's death in 1899. *Synoplotherium* was the first creature to ever be mounted at the Peabody.



Synoplotherium foot

The right front foot of *Synoplotherium*, still in rock. From Wortman, 1902.

The skeleton hasn't budged a bone since it was put back together in 1899. Each part of the German shepherd-sized carnivore creates the impression of an animal that is like a dog, but not quite. The tail's too long, the skull's too big, and the feet end in flat, blunted toes rather than claws. Now you might understand why paleontologists sometimes call *Synoplotherium* and its relatives – known as mesonychids – "wolves with hooves."

Were *Synoplotherium* a dinosaur, there'd probably be an expansive literature on the Cenozoic flesh-ripper. It was the apex predator of a time when mammalian evolution took some decidedly strange turns, or at least what we'd consider odd with our 45 million years of hindsight. Things as they are, however, *Synoplotherium* is much like *Patriofelis* and other Eocene oddities – they have been named, categorized, and reconstructed, but not

understood.

The first and last major source of information on *Synoplotherium* is a section of a massive review of Eocene mammals laid out by paleontologist Jacob Wortman in 1902. He covered the whole animal from its oversized skull to what remained of its tail, detecting a few surprises along the way. "The lower jaw of the individual under consideration is of unusual pathological interest, as showing, among these ancient animals, the result of healing of a fracture," Wortman wrote. This *Synoplotherium* not only had the left side of its jaw cracked right at the midpoint, but survived the ordeal to old age, as shown by its worn-down teeth.

What broke the carnivore's jaw? No one knows. Paleontologist G.R. Weiland commented that the break "was doubtless received in some raid on the young of *Palaeosyops*" – one of the rhino-like brontotheres – but this was just offhand speculation. It's just one of countless mysteries that still surround the animal. I pulled the tomes *Evolution of Tertiary Mammals of North America* and *The Beginning of the Age of Mammals* off my shelf when I got home from my last visit to the Peabody, hoping for more, but compendiums didn't offer much detail beyond dental formulae and the impression that *Synoplotherium* was more of a runner than other mesonychids. Even among experts, this beast has been neglected.

Still, the bones remain. Their display cocoon makes study difficult – Marsh wasn't totally off-base – but they still stand there, waiting to spill their stories. Clues about how *Synoplotherium* moved, ate, healed, and more are all patiently waiting, ready to show us a little more about a mammalian dawn when life was simultaneously familiar and strange. Go see for yourself, if you can, and wait a moment in the dim quiet for the beast to speak to you.

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The views expressed are those of the author(s) and are not necessarily those of Scientific American.

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Zombie apocalypse happening NOW, Pastor claims as 'Hell breaks loose on Earth'

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Zombie apocalypse happening NOW, Pastor claims as 'Hell breaks loose on Earth'

A PASTOR has said a zombie apocalypse is upon us after linking modern day events to a Biblical prophecy – and it has already begun.

By Sean Martin

PUBLISHED: 16:09, Fri, May 13, 2016 | UPDATED: 16:20, Fri, May 13, 2016

The zombie apocalypse is apparently already upon us

"Demon spirits" are possessing people just like in a Biblical prophecy Pastor Paul Begley has interpreted.

He begins by quoting John 5:28-29, which reads: "Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out - those who have done what is good will rise to live, and those who have done what is evil will rise to be condemned."

In the video recently uploaded to YouTube, pastor Begley highlights the 2012 case of Rudy Eugene, who was shot dead by police after consuming bath salts and attacking a homeless man – eating a large part of his face while carrying a Bible.

In another story the pastor talks about a policeman of 18 years who was in his car with three bibles when he stripped down and ran into an apartment complex, attacked a man and began screaming "I want your son, I want to eat your son" before jumping out of the second story window where he was arrested.

Is this the end?

Begley says that he has documented 35 accounts of people acting like 'zombies' and noticed a recurring theme.

Of the incidents, he said there was "Superhuman strength, stripping down naked, some cases quoting scriptures, some cases having bibles, some cases saying that they are the Messiah".

He added: "This is an actual manifestation of demonic spirits, and people what I'm talking about here – this is demon possession."

He adds the apocalypse is "already beginning".

Pastor Begley: "We're beginning to see ancient viruses coming back, I mean Ebola, what it did in West Africa was horrendous, we got the bubonic plague in Colorado, Legionnaire's disease surfaced and over 175 people got sick with it in New York.

"We're seeing an outbreak of polio in Pakistan of Biblical proportions. We see deer dying like crazy in Washington State in what they call the bluetongue disease.

"We're witnessing wildfires burning out of control, we're witnessing wells running dry, we're witnessing all kinds of different apocalyptic events – earthquakes and different things.

The pastor says it was foretold in the Bible

"But we're also seeing what seems to be a resurrection of demon spirits.

"All hell will break loose on this planet just before the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, and I'm telling you it's already beginning."

Such is the threat that, according to him, "the Department of Homeland Security had an entire year ... where employees were trained on how to deal with a zombie apocalypse".

While many agreed with the pastor, others were quick to dismiss his claims.

One YouTuber commented: "Legion has nothing to do with 'zombies'. please stop just using buzzwords to get views."

Another added: "You need to check your facts Begley."

18 Comments

11 hours ago

Islandmonkey

He is right they are coming to europe in their hundreds of thousands.

14 days ago

kerensab

Zombies = Stay Sentient beings = LEAVE

20 days ago

Teddy Bear

Baths salts and certain drugs can open the certain people to demonic possession. While the mind is asleep, the demons can enter and take control. There was an epidemic of this in USA a few years ago.

21 days ago

VoiceOfReason

Demonic possession would explain a LOT about lefty liberals and muslims.

(edited)20 days ago

Teddy Bear

Muslims aren't liberal. They are the opposite but like the liberals as they allow the to get away with what they do.

21 days ago

apache

Zombie apocalypse = Merkel and the EUSSR.

20 days ago

Teddy Bear

No they know what they are doing thyley are in control. The zombies are those ordinary people who support the EU and wish to remain.

21 days ago

Craigyllyn

Astonishing! Here we are in 2016 and that idiotic book continues to poison minds. Chuck it in the rubbish bin.

20 days ago

Teddy Bear

The Zombie apocalypse is possible. Check out zombie ants. A fungus causes them to be zombies. It could happen. You are just too stubborn to believe anything outside of your closed mindset. A closed mind is a dangerous one. It is what the Muslims have. Open your mind and heart to Jesus , he will heal you and oou will not fall to zombie demonics.

20 days ago

Craigyllyn

Been there; done that; escaped.Stubborn? Closed mindset? Dammit, man, you are using the very words that describe the victim of religion. Dogma is your creed; reason your enemy.

18 days ago

Teddy Bear

You talk nonsense. There is no real meaning to your words.

21 days ago

CAMERONSEND

Thats what all those lies,has made cameron's face really look like.

22 days ago

PhilDin

Hah, I saw this and scrolled down to see how many obsessives would mention Muslims or immigration - 2 for 2!

20 days ago

Teddy Bear

You have mentioned the Muslims which are very much a zombie religion. It is a dead religion a death cult.

22 days ago

denisesmith

Yes we are living in last days. Does not mention zombies in bible but Isis and other evil ones are like them.

20 days ago

Teddy Bear

ISIS muslims are very much a death cult zombie cult. Some of their extreme members eat human flesh. I heard about one cutting the heart out and eating it.

22 days ago

Islandmonkey

Bit late pal the zombie apocalypse started with the muslim invasion of europe and they really do want to cut your head off.

20 days ago

Teddy Bear

They also cut heart out and eat it. Google it. Media don't like to mention this much because of the support ISIS got from UK and USA against Assad and Syria.

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